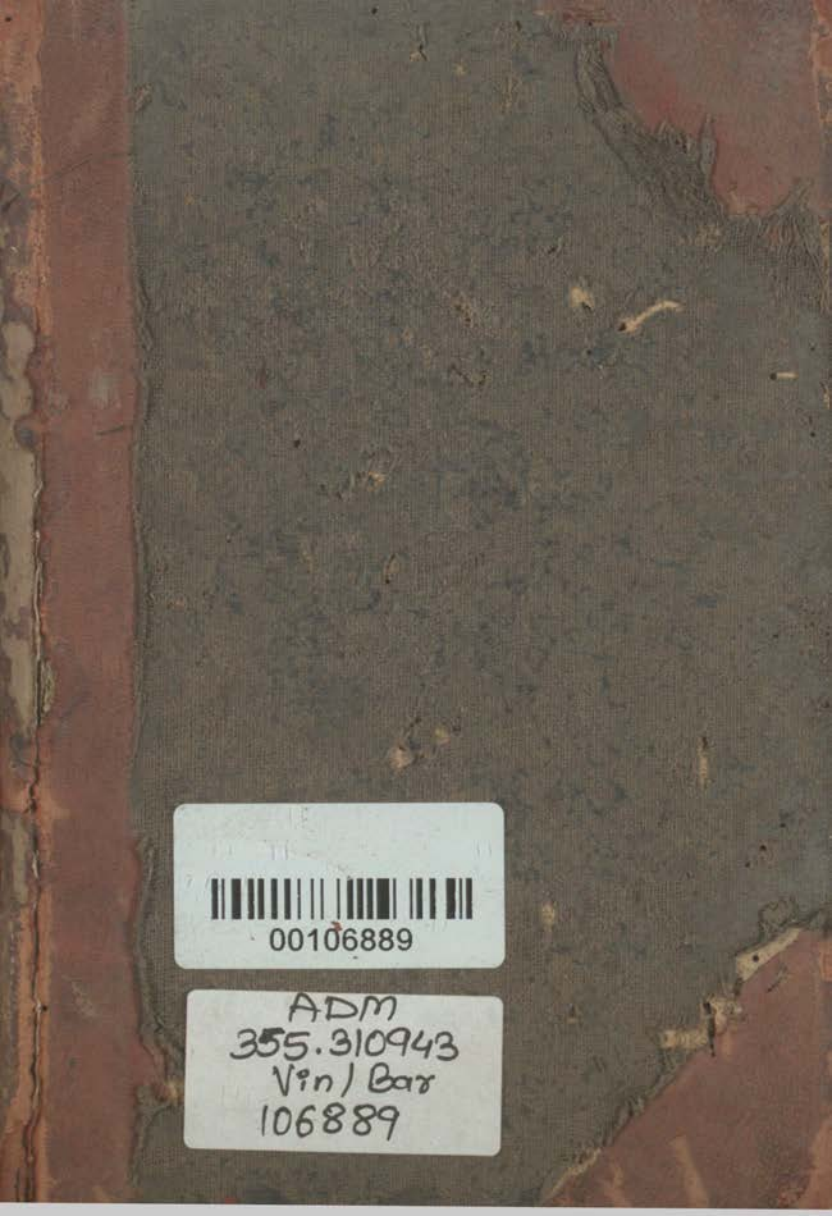
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THE

# MILITARY FORCES OF PRUSSIA.

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# BARON STOFFEL'S REPORTS

ON THE

# MILITARY FORCES OF PRUSSIA

ADDRESSED TO THE FRENCH MINISTER OF WAR

1868—1870.

106889

TRANSLATED BY

C. E. H. VINCENT,

23D ROYAL WELSH FUSILIERS.

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# PREFACE.

THE history of the papers here placed before the reader may be given in few words. The Despatches of Baron Stoffel have acquired a reputation which makes it almost unnecessary to state that, from the year 1866 to the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war, he was the military attaché to the French embassy at Berlin. In this capacity he drew up for the Imperial Government, and addressed to the French Minister of War, a series of Reports, in which the condition of the military forces of Prussia was exhaustively examined. An abridgement of these Reports fell into the hands of a publisher in Paris during the siege of that city. This abridgement has already had a wide and rapid circulation in France, when the translation which is now republished appeared in the columns of 'Fraser's Magazine.' After the close of the war Baron Stoffel, who served throughout the struggle, with a singular goodfortune in escaping imminent risks of capture, determined, as some of his Despatches had seen the light of day, that the whole should be published.

This has accordingly been done; but the present

volume represents simply the abridgement of the despatches. The volume containing the Reports in full is on a scale which places it beyond the reach of the majority even of the reading public. It has, however, been thought that this circumstance will in no way detract from the interest with which the reader may peruse these Reports in their shortened form, while a further good will have been effected by the present publication if it should induce any to go through the larger work, which exhibits in full detail the opinion of an officer whose character for integrity and truth stands almost unrivalled, and whose energy and zeal, not less than his acuteness of observation and his honesty of purpose, furnish worthy models not only to the armies, but also to the nations of Europe.

That the Emperor should have had these despatches in his hand before declaring war seems strange and unaccountable. Framed by an officer he trusted, and faithful to his own cause, they showed him what must be the inevitable result of a Franco-Prussian conflict. Can it be that he knew that any amelioration was impossible from the state into which France had declined—that succeeding years must only drag her further down into the mire of degradation, and that with her fall would come that of his dynasty;—that reading the final despatch of June 24, 1870, in which Baron Stoffel gives October 1, 1871, as the date from which the whole Germanic race would enter upon all the advantages of its military reorganisation, he resolved to strike at once, knowing that 'time was indeed

the surest ally of the Prussian Chancellor?' Baron Stoffel predicted that 'a small, insignificant event would probably set ablaze the flame long smouldering between the two countries;' and this cause was supplied by the empty throne of helpless Spain. The despatches themselves must now take up the narrative; and if in reading them any Englishman should think that 'the ignorance, the arrogance, the presumption, and the blindness' of the French before the war are in some degree applicable to his own country, let him resolve individually to steer clear of the faults of that unhappy people. If we unite, like Prussia, in encouraging the Government to put the country in a proper state to maintain her integrity, honour, and dignity, even at the cost of some little sacrifice of personal comfort, we shall never require our Jena, or our Sedan, to bring us to a sense of our duty to ourselves and to civilisation.

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# REPORTS.

## I.

## THE ELEMENTS OF SUPERIORITY IN THE PRUSSIAN ARMY.

*April* 23, 1868.

In the midst of the numerous and various studies which occupy the attention of an officer placed in my position, there is one great question, which constantly and involuntarily presents itself before him:

If war were to break out to-morrow between France and Prussia, would the Prussian army be in any way superior to that of the French, either as regards its armament, its organisation, its instruction, or in military spirit? If any elements of superiority exist, what are they? And, lastly, what must we do to remedy our inferiority?

For the present, I propose to take no notice of those points which lie deeper than the upper surface, such as the command-in-chief—which certainly is one of the most important features of armies—the number of combatants at the disposal of the two nations, and the general resources of the two countries. To make my meaning clearer, I will suppose that these details are equal on both sides. Even now, the problem which I propose to handle is one of the most difficult to solve, as it is my intention to treat as fully

as possible of the most important matters in the composition of armies. I intend, however, to avoid any direct verdict, either in favour of the one side or the other, but to examine carefully and impartially the various properties which would give the Prussians a great advantage in the event of an early war.

The elements of superiority which one army possesses over another are distinctly divisible into two classes:

The one refers to the character of the nation—its physical temperament, its traditions, its history, the degree of education it possesses, &c.; which may be termed 'moral' elements. The other is the result of the organisation of the army, the military education of the officers, non-commissioned officers, and men; the quality and quantity of the material of war, of the armament, of the equipment of the troops, &c. These are the 'material' elements.

I need not speak on this subject with reference to the French army, as the qualities which distinguish it are well known.

All intelligent military men in Prussia recognise the greater individuality, the greater intelligence, the incomparable *élan*, which our troops possess. They look upon the French humour, gaiety, and carelessness, as precious virtues in time of war; they acknowledge that our troops are more ingenious, and that they march better.[1] They also admit the superiority which the longer period of service with the colours and the presence of old soldiers in the

[1] Prussia as a rule is a flat country. It is well known that the inhabitants of flat districts march worse than the inhabitants of hilly countries. This was clearly shown to be the case in the war of 1866. The corps d'armée recruited from East Prussia, Pomerania, and Brandenburg suffered far more from the wearisome marches through the Bohemian mountain passes than the Silesian corps, for instance.

ranks give the French army; but, above all, they envy our establishment of non-commissioned officers.[1]

With respect to the armament of the infantry I have already acquainted you how concerned the Prussian authorities are about the superiority of our new rifle, and how every effort is being brought to bear on the improvement of the Prussian weapon.

I must now confine myself to the Prussian army.

## Moral Elements of Superiority.

Under the moral head, there are two things which combine to secure to the Prussian service an incontestable advantage over other European armies: (1) the system of obligatory military service; (2) the education of every class of society.

### *Obligatory Service.*

It is useless to dwell further (I did so at length in my reports of 1866) on the moral value of the presence in the ranks of every class of the nation, and of the conviction that the army and the Landwehr combined represent the entire country in arms. Whatever defects one may discover in the Prussian military organisation, it is impossible to suppress one's admiration for a people who, understanding that the first condition of happiness for nations as well as for individuals is to be independent, resolved that the army should be the first and the most honoured institution; that every available citizen should share the duties and honour of defending the country, or of extending its power and

[1] The Prussian army certainly has non-commissioned officers of long service; but the number is limited in consequence of the system of obligatory service, which necessitates the enrolment of the whole annual contingent.

dominion; and that they should, above all others, be honoured and esteemed.[1]

Taking account only of the officers, what a brilliant example they give to the other classes! The high-born and the wealthy do not live as elsewhere in a deplorable state of idleness and self-indulgence. Far from it. The members of the richest families, of the most ancient houses, become officers, and submit to the labour and hardships of a military life. They set the example; and, beholding such a sight, it is impossible to restrain one's admiration for that rough and philosophic nation; but one cannot help a feeling of awe when thinking of the nation which possesses in its army such unparalleled advantages.

### *Compulsory Education.*

The system of compulsory education has been adopted in Prussia for thirty years, and one may almost say from the time of Frederick the Great; thus the Prussian nation is the most enlightened in Europe, owing to the education so thoroughly distributed among every class of society. The Polish provinces alone are somewhat inferior in an intellectual point of view.

In France one is so completely ignorant of all that refers to foreign countries, that nothing is known of the vast school of learning so firmly rooted in Northern Germany. Large schools abound; and while in France the seats of learning and intellectual development are

[1] I have frequently stated that all honours, advantages, and favours are reserved for those who are serving, or who have served, in the army. He who has not been a soldier never finds employment, and in towns and villages he is constantly exposed to the taunts and sneers of his fellows.

confined to a few great cities, Germany is covered with such institutions, and to enumerate them it would be necessary to include towns even of the third and fourth order.

I will not dwell on the advantages which an extensive education affords in the composition of an army. But is it not somewhat strange that in France men who have a reputation for ability and clearness of mind refuse to believe in them? Is it not tantamount to denying that instruction and education develop the faculties of man, and elevate his ideas by giving him a greater sense of his own dignity? Those *savants* innocently affirm that an army of rough, uncivilised soldiers, but accustomed to warfare, will defeat an army composed of well-educated men, who, however, have no warlike experiences.

I simply ask what general would hesitate in choosing between the command of two armies, each consisting of one hundred thousand men, the one composed of pupils of the École Polytechnique and St.-Cyr, and the other composed of uncouth peasants from Limousin and Berry; both armies being equal in point of discipline, physical force, and length of service? If he took but one consideration into account—the rapid training of his recruits—it alone must instantly determine his decision. But there are other moral advantages, which he could not ignore, and which make the one army worth ten times as much as the other. I can further bring the experience I acquired in Bohemia in 1866 to bear on this subject; for Prussian officers and sergeants, proud of their victories, ascribed them in a great measure to the intellectual superiority of their men, and told me, 'When, after the first battles, our men found themselves in the presence of Austrian prisoners, when they examined and questioned them, and found that the majority hardly knew the right hand from the left, there was not a

Prussian who did not conceive himself a god compared to such miserable wretches, and this conviction increased our strength tenfold.'

### *Sense of Duty.*

I cannot omit to call attention to a quality which particularly characterises the Prussian nation, and which serves to increase the moral value of its army, namely, the sense of Duty. It is so extraordinarily developed in every section of the community, that the more one studies the Prussian character the more one marvels at it. As, however, it is not in my province to search for the root of this sentiment, I content myself with stating it as a fact. The most remarkable proof of this devotion is shown by the *employés* of the various civil departments of the Government, men paid with surprising parsimony, generally burdened with large families, but who slave all day with an indefatigable zeal, without a murmur or giving evidence of discontent or of a wish to rise into a more comfortable position. M. de Bismarck said to me a few days ago, 'We take good care to leave this class as they are; this *bureaucratie*, hard-working and ill-paid, do our work admirably, and constitute one of our chief supports.'

## Material Elements of Superiority.

### *Special Corps permanently organised.*

Among the principal material advantages possessed by Prussia, the facility which its military organisation gives it of creating special services, such as railway and telegraphic companies, companies of bearers of the wounded, is one of the most important. In my reports of 1866 I

dwelt on the most important details connected with these services; I described the numbers, composition, and duties of each service; so that it only remains for me now to add that, by means of the Landwehr, these services are maintained without deducting a single combatant from the active army; and, moreover, in time of peace they are on a permanent footing. One word, however, about the companies of bearers of the wounded. It is a service of which we are ignorant in France, nevertheless I think that at the outset of a campaign it will be necessary to tell off four or five men per company, whose sole duty will be to pick up the wounded. These men will be of some use, but I do not think that we shall then be slow to acknowledge what far more important services they might have rendered if they had been organised beforehand, with their exact duties defined, and having received a sufficient training to be able to discharge them. If the establishment of companies of bearers of the wounded be advisable solely from philanthropic views, they might be dispensed with; but their actual influence on the battle-field appears incontestable.

In fact, what did we notice during the Italian campaign? As soon as a man was wounded three or four of his comrades left the ranks with the excuse of carrying the wounded man to the rear. Surely this serious inconvenience would be entirely obviated if the men knew that a special service existed, charged with the sole duty of carrying the wounded off the field, and of attending to the worst cases on the spot. In Prussia the companies of bearers of the wounded are composed of Landwehr men of irreproachable character. It might indeed be difficult for us to find four or five men per company sufficiently qualified under the latter head.

### *Infantry Rifle Practice.*

If our new rifle of 1866 possesses all the good qualities which are ascribed to it, we not only have no cause to envy the Prussians in this respect, but are indeed superior to them. It is undeniable, however, that *cæteris paribus*, considering the character and temperament of the two nations, the firing of the Prussian infantry would be more formidable than that of the French infantry. The Prussian soldier, being a more phlegmatic, less impressionable creature than our own, will, it is thought, fire with more steadiness and accuracy. This conviction is thoroughly rife among the Prussian soldiery, and I have frequently heard it expressed. I will add that it is impossible to devote too much attention to rifle practice. In Prussia no pains are too great to accomplish a satisfactory result. Every man has issued to him annually one hundred and twenty ball cartridges, in spite of any length of service, besides four thousand blank cartridges for brigade or divisional purposes. Besides this, the artillery gives, after practice, to those battalions who return more than one-third of the weight of shot used, a certain number of blank cartridges, in proportion to the amount of lead returned to them. These cartridges are used to break in the inexperienced, from which it will be assumed that each Prussian soldier fires annually one hundred and thirty rounds. All the regimental officers take part in the practical instruction, and figure on the registers. Colonels and even generals are frequently present at the final annual examinations, in order to show the great importance with which they treat the matter; for it has been found that the more perfect the rifle of the infantry soldier is made, the more necessary it is to pay attention to the instruction in the use of it.

*Artillery Practice.*

If war were to burst upon us, we should have to take pressing and stringent measures to counteract the vast superiority of the Prussian artillery over the French. I do not deny that our gun carriages are far lighter than the Prussian, and that our field pieces are more movable; but the 4-pounder and 6-pounder Prussian field guns shoot with far greater accuracy, and have a longer range, than ours. The German work on this subject, which I annex to my report, leaves no room for doubt. Moreover, the Prussian field guns fire with far greater rapidity than ours. But what is the argument of the large number of artillery officers in our service who deny that this is an advantage, and contend that the rapidity of fire of our field guns is sufficient for all practical purposes? One would think that it was a moral impossibility for an occasion to arrive in action when it would be of paramount importance to hurl, in a given time, the greatest possible number of projectiles, either against the enemy's columns or against his artillery. The advantage of the force capable of firing with the greater rapidity would then be evident.

With regard to the greater accuracy of the shooting of Prussian field guns, I consider it to be so important a point that I shall make a special report on the subject.

Respecting the drill of the *personnel* of the Prussian artillery, it is in no way superior to ours, for the gunners serve barely two years in the active army. As to the officers, instead of enjoying, as in our service, a higher reputation than those of the other arms of the service, it is rather the contrary; but in point of scientific education they by no means yield the palm to France.

### Prussian and Austrian Artillery.

I may here perhaps be permitted to digress a little in reference to a popular error, existing since the campaign of 1866. It has been frequently asserted, verbally as well as on paper, that the Austrian artillery is superior to the Prussian. This verdict emanates from Austria, which alone should have made one mistrust the truth of the assertion. For those who wish to ascertain the true facts of the events of the Bohemian campaign the error is complete. If it had been only said that during the war of 1866 the Austrian artillery did more damage to the Prussian artillery than *vice versâ*, none could have contested the fact; but an explanation is necessary.

1st. As Prussia had not completed the armament of her field batteries with the 4 and 6 pounder steel breech-loader, she was obliged to enter on the campaign with a third of her artillery composed of bronze pieces; but not a single opportunity occurred for using these guns, or where it was possible for them to oppose the rifled long-range cannon of the Austrian artillery. Every Prussian artillery officer that I spoke to on the subject said that these bronze pieces were a constant source of hindrance and annoyance throughout the campaign.

2ndly. Owing to the strategical operations of the war, the offensive was generally taken by the Prussians. At Nachod, at Skalitz, at Trautenau, the Prussian divisions debouching from the mountain passes found the Austrians drawn up ready to receive them. It is thus apparent that it was far more difficult for the Prussian artillery to choose an advantageous position, especially as they were wholly unacquainted with the nature of the ground. The battle of Königgrätz (Sadowa) furnishes the most striking example. The Austrian artillery, covered by

épaulements, took up its position beforehand on all the commanding points of the range of hills which stretch from Maslowedod to Prim, whilst the Prussian artillery, which attacked, had to overcome the dangers of hastily choosing positions on commanded ground.

Thus the Prussian artillery was unable, throughout the Bohemian campaign, to utilise a third of its effective strength, and upon that arm, nevertheless, devolved the most important duties on the various battle-fields. Such is the double reason for which the Austrian artillery was actually able to do more damage to the Prussian artillery than it itself sustained. But I again repeat, it is a false statement that the former is superior to the latter; in reality the Prussian material is superior to the Austrian, as will be seen by the German report I forwarded on February 20, and the Prussian artillery officers are better educated and more instructed than the Austrian. I am unable to state whether the training of the men differs.

By this digression I have only been desirous of correcting a false idea which has been constantly gaining additional credit. The error probably arose at the battle of Königgrätz, where a portion of the Austrian artillery showed the most heroic devotion in endeavouring to cover the retreat at the close of that disastrous day.

I will here sum up briefly the principal elements of superiority which exist in the Prussian army, the reasons for which I have endeavoured to explain:

The deep and healthy moral feeling that the system of obligatory military service creates in the army, which contains all the *élite* of the male population, all the talents and ability, all the animal resources of the country, and which considers itself as the nation in arms.

The intellectual standard of the army, which is far above that of any other country, owing to the genêral and universal education of every grade.

The sense of duty, which is far more fully developed through every grade than in France.

The special services (railway and telegraphic companies and companies of bearers of the wounded), which are permanently established and trained with the utmost care and attention, without detracting from the numerical force of the combatants.

The better shooting of the infantry, owing to the phlegmatic North German character and to the extraordinary attention paid to rifle practice.

The vast superiority of the *matériel* of the field artillery in point of accuracy, range, and rapidity of firing.

### *Superiority of the Prussian Staff.*

But of all the elements of superiority which Prussia would possess in an early war, the greatest, the most undoubted, the most formidable, would incontestably lie in the composition of its Staff.

It is useless to conceal it; it must one day come upon us as an appalling truth—the Prussian staff is the first in Europe; ours cannot be compared to it. I dwelt at great length on this subject in my reports of 1866, and unhesitatingly urged that it was of the utmost importance that our staff corps should be immediately brought to the level of the Prussian. Convinced that, in the event of an approaching war, the army of the North German Confederation would derive the most important advantages by reason of the superiority of its staff, and that we should cruelly rue our inferiority, I return once more to this

question, which, in my mind, is of the first importance. I cannot deny it—my conviction is so strong on the subject that I unhesitatingly sound the alarm, 'Caveant consules!' I should fail in my duty did I act otherwise.

I will therefore explain the system of the Prussian staff and illustrate its rudimentary principles, and I have little doubt that the reasons of the Prussian superiority will then be apparent.

When I reached Prague, during the armistice of 1866, my first acquaintances in the Prussian army were with officers of the staff. I was immediately struck with their efficiency; they all, without a single exception, were men of great intelligence, in whom military ability was the principal characteristic. As I gradually increased my circle of acquaintances my astonishment did not diminish; in every sphere of the military system I met officers calm, steady, full of knowledge, talent, and judgment. It became interesting to look for the reasons which brought it about, and I began carefully to study the organisation of the Prussian staff.

### *Composition of the Prussian Staff.*

In Prussia the composition of the staff is controlled by neither law nor regulation. The authorities started from the sound principle, that of all the officers of the army, those of the staff ought to be the most intelligent and the best educated. It was thought that even if it mattered little if an officer commanding a company or a squadron possessed great military ability, it was quite otherwise with a staff officer. His varied duties, the influence which his reports on every subject may have upon the decision of a general, especially in the present age, when armies

are large and the theatre of operations very extensive, make it necessary for him to have had a special education, and to possess peculiar zeal and ability.[1] When the principle was recognised, that of all the officers of the army those of the staff must be the most capable, what steps were taken to bring it into practical effect? It was decided to recruit officers for the staff among those of every branch of the service, and to give those who offered themselves every inducement and stimulus, by rapid promotion, &c., to exert themselves; the power, however, being reserved of immediately dismissing from the staff, at any moment of their career, those officers who failed to show sufficient ability or zeal in the discharge of their duties. In consequence of these measures, the candidates for the staff are all young officers, ambitious, intelligent, and hard-working: ambitious, because they seek rapid promotion; intelligent, because they know that if they do not come up to the required intellectual standard they will be sent back to their regiments.

In order thoroughly to understand the advantages that are reserved for officers of the staff, it is necessary to remember that in the Prussian army promotion is generally by seniority. The King has the power of promoting by selection any officer of the services; but as he does not use this prerogative more than once in thirty or forty cases, it may be said that in a general way promotion is by seniority. Therefore the officers who are definitely accepted for the staff reach the higher grades quite seven or eight years sooner than they otherwise would.

[1] Frederick the Great, in his Memoirs, speaks of the great importance of having well-educated and intelligent staff officers. He attributes the defeats of Malplaquet and Lutzen to the inefficiency of the staff.

### *Recruiting of Staff Officers.*

I now enter upon the details necessary to explain the means by which the Prussian staff corps is formed.

The Prussian army, or rather the army of the North German Confederation, is composed, as indeed is well known, of permanent corps d'armée. It has also a permanent chief of the staff, General de Moltke. He is, moreover, the absolute commander of the staff corps, considering it as a separate body. On him devolves the duty of choosing the officers to be admitted and employed; he promotes them from one grade to another (the Minister contenting himself with the ratification of the same); he, too, allots to them their various duties. His power is unlimited; and this position, which would appear impossible in France, here appears to be perfectly rational and simple, owing perhaps as much to the talent and integrity of General de Moltke as to the composition of permanent corps d'armée.

Every subaltern of every arm of the service has the opportunity of offering himself as a candidate for the Academy of War (Kriegs-Academie) at Berlin, after he has served three years as a commissioned officer with his regiment. The Academy of War is a superior military school, without its equal in Europe, either for the ability of its professors or its extensive course of study. It is not simply a staff college; its aim is far more extensive. It is rather a school where officers of intelligence and ambition may receive thorough instruction in the higher science of the theory of war, and by that means form a secure groundwork for their ultimate intellectual development,

which renders them capable of service on the staff, and the higher command of troops.[1]

As I annex to this report a copy of the regulations concerning the studies at the Academy, I do not think it necessary to give the detailed programme. It is sufficient to say that the course of study includes the following subjects : Tactics (theoretical and practical), military history, mining (theoretical and practical), armament, fortification (field and permanent), history of sieges, staff service, topography, administration; and, as accessory subjects, mathematics, geology, general history, literature, elements of philosophy, general geography, chemistry, experimental sciences, and, lastly, the French, English, and Russian languages.

After a difficult examination, at which about one hundred and twenty subalterns (I take the average) compete annually, about forty are admitted into the Academy, all having a more or less earnest desire to become officers of the staff. The course of study lasts three years from October 1 following the examination.

The course of study during the first year lasts nine months, after which the students return to their respective regiments, where they remain for the three following months (from July 1 to October 1), in order to take part in the grand autumn manœuvres.

This is also the case in the second year.

In the third year, however, the students receive the instruction particularly important for those who are ad-

[1] Nearly all the Generals of the Prussian army have been pupils of the Academy of War, and three-fourths of them have served on the staff. The proportion will continue to increase. The École Polytechnique, and those of Metz and St.-Cyr, are only special schools compared to the Prussian Academy of War, with its extensive programme.

mitted to the staff, and the tenth month is devoted to a tour (if possible in a hilly country) under the direction of the professors. During this staff tour they make reconnaissances ; they give their opinion on the value of a district in a military point of view ; they execute military sketches, choose sites for the encampment of troops, and work out various given problems, &c., &c.

*First Choice among the Pupils of the Academy.*

After the lapse of the three years comprising the course, the whole of the officer-students, without a final examination or numerical classification, are sent back to their respective regiments. The professors and the director of the Academy point out to General de Moltke the names of the most able and the most industrious. From these he chooses twelve, among whom are officers of each branch of the service, and during the year following their exit from the Academy they are attached for six or nine months to a regiment of an arm of the service different from their own. Those who have shown zeal and ability during this stage are accepted by General de Moltke, and are summoned to Berlin to do duty at head quarters. They retain their original uniform and character.

The period which these officers spend at head quarters, about eighteen months or two years, has the greatest possible influence on their future life ; for there they are in a species of staff college, whose chief is General de Moltke himself, whose power is absolute. In instructing them he gradually gets to know them and to estimate their relative value. He takes care to accustom them successively to the work of each of the six subdivisions into which head quarters are divided ; he lectures to them ; he gives them

reports to draw up on various subjects; he reads and criticises these productions before the whole body, but without divulging the name of the author, in order not to hurt the susceptibilities of the less able, and not to give the more talented too high an opinion of their abilities.

*Second Choice.*

After this sojourn of the candidates at head quarters, the selection of General de Moltke is made. He might immediately appoint those he has chosen; but in order not to wound the feelings of their competitors he sends them all back again to their respective regiments.

Those who have failed do duty with their regiments, and retain but the shadowy recollection of the tests they have passed through; the successful ones are promoted after the lapse of a few months to the rank of captain, and are styled staff officers, and don the uniform of the same.

*Promotion by Selection to the Rank of Captain.*

General de Moltke, in the capacity of Permanent Chief of the Staff of the Army, distributes these captains through the service according to the requirements of the moment. Some he retains at head quarters, employing them in matters for which they have shown special ability; but the greater number he sends to the various corps d'armée, or divisions, where they have to become acquainted with general service. Particular care is taken to avoid employing the time of staff officers with clerical work, which is invariably executed by non-commissioned officers and soldiers, under the superintendence of the officers, who can consequently employ themselves with studies more useful and more dignified—the very opposite to what we see in France.

At the end of two years or two years and a half, these captains cease to do duty on the staff; and to avoid bringing them into contact with their former comrades, over whose heads they have passed, they are posted to a different regiment from that in which they served as a subaltern. There they receive, according to the branch of the service, the command of a company, battery, or squadron.

*Promotion by Selection to the Rank of Chef d'Escadron.*

After about two years' service, as above, in a regiment, they are promoted by selection to the rank of chef d'escadron, and resume their places and uniform on the staff. General de Moltke employs them according to the requirements of the service, either at head quarters at Berlin, or with one of the corps d'armée or divisions.

I here call particular attention to the system of continual examinations and siftings to which the officers of the staff are subjected; for, as I said before, if at head quarters at Berlin, or on the staff of a corps d'armée or division, an officer was found whose abilities had been too highly estimated, or whose zeal was beginning to wane, he would not be promoted to the rank of chef d'escadron, but would be left to do regimental duty and would have no further chance of staff employment.

Before going further I will explain the advantages by which staff officers profit. It is precisely in the rapid passage from captain to chef d'escadron. They gain here six or seven years on their compeers; and as they have gained one in passing from lieutenant to captain, it puts the total gain at seven or eight years.[1]

[1] As may be easily imagined, these officers are looked on with some jealousy by the rest of the army; but the feeling is very limited, as in staff officers there can be no doubt of their real ability, and of the incessant hard work to which they are subjected.

*Alternative Duty with the Staff and with a Regiment.*

When staff officers have obtained the rank of chef d'escadron they have no further special advantages to look forward to; but it is noteworthy that at every grade of the hierarchy they are only promoted after having served at least one year with a regiment. Thus one year at least before a staff officer expects his promotion to Lieutenant-Colonel he leaves the staff and takes over the command of a complete battalion, or of several squadrons, or of several batteries; and before a lieut.-colonel can be promoted to full colonel on the staff, he must have held the command for at least a year of an entire regiment (three battalions) of infantry, of cavalry, or of artillery.

Thus staff officers lose neither the power of command nor the practice of equitation, if, on the staff they are employed in a sedentary occupation.

*Search throughout the Army for Officers possessing Qualifications suitable for the Staff.*

But even this is not all that is done to insure the service on the staff of all officers possessing special qualifications which may be usefully employed for the good of the public service. The officers of whom I have hitherto treated are all of one class; they are twelve pupils chosen out of forty who were admitted into the Academy of War, out of 120 who offered themselves. But as it was justly argued, that out of all the numerous subalterns of the army having more than three years' service, there must certainly be some of special ability who for one reason or another did not offer themselves as candidates for the Academy of War, and that even among the eighty who failed to pass the entrance examination there might be

some whose services would be of importance, it was therefore thought unwise to throw away the chance of procuring thoroughly good officers for a mere technicality. The following measures are consequently in force:

The officers commanding regiments are requested to signify to General de Moltke, through the usual channel of communication, the names of those officers under their command who are remarkable for their special talents, their zeal for the service, and desirable physical qualifications for the staff. It is noteworthy that in this respect it is rather necessary to moderate the zeal of commanding officers than to stimulate it, so eager are they to be known as possessing able officers, and so willing to push them rapidly forward for the good of the service. General de Moltke sends to the officers whose names have been submitted to him questions to study, problems to work out, &c.; and if he then consider them meritorious, he summons them to head quarters at Berlin. If during their probationary residence there they give further undoubted proof of ability, he appoints them staff officers and employs them according to their qualifications. On the other hand, if he fail to discover the talents they are said to possess, he sends them back to their regiments, where for a time they are subjected to the quizzing of their comrades.

I mentioned previously, that on the staff of corps d'armée and divisions the time of officers was employed more profitably than in a fruitless clerical labour, which was always executed by non-commissioned officers and men. In point of fact, besides their ordinary routine duties the Generals give them military questions to study, and annually the staff of each corps makes a tour termed a staff tour, under the superintendence of its own chief, in order to keep up and extend their knowledge.

The officers of the head quarters staff at Berlin also make an annual tour, lasting a fortnight or three weeks —sometimes in one province, sometimes in another— under the personal direction of General de Moltke.

### *Causes which combine to make the Prussian Staff superior to any other.*

I trust that I have succeeded in showing, by what I have already written, the reasons which constitute the superiority of the Prussian staff corps: 1st, Because it is recruited throughout the army, every subaltern being invited to compete. 2ndly, Because only ambitious, intelligent, and hard-working officers present themselves: ambitious, because they long for rapid promotion; intelligent and hard-working, because they know how, throughout their career, they will have to labour incessantly and submit to a constant sifting, to separate the wheat from the chaff.

It is thus, in carrying out the principle that the staff corps must only be composed of the *élite* of the army, and by securing to staff officers material advantages by rapid promotion, that the Prussian army has the best staff in Europe. The more I see of it, and the more opportunity I have of comparing it with our own, the more forcibly am I struck with our inferiority. I do not for a minute mean to deny that France possesses staff officers whose abilities are equal to those of the most capable officers in the Prussian staff corps. But the latter does not contain any officers of mediocre ability; and how many have we, on the other hand, whose education has been more than insufficient! How many do we not find who can hardly read a military map, who have no knowledge of the manœuvres of the different arms, who have never studied modern campaigns, and who indeed—for

we saw that it was the case in the Italian campaign of 1859—are unable to choose the camping-ground fit for a brigade of infantry or a regiment of cavalry![1] Here we find nothing of that kind. Such officers would not be admitted into the staff corps, or, at any rate, they would be expelled therefrom as soon as their inefficiency showed itself. It does not come within my province to point out the means by which our staff corps may be lifted out of the mire; but it is in vain that I endeavour to understand the basis of its organisation. Do we intend that the officers of the staff shall be the *élite* of the army? By no means. With us the recruiting of the staff corps is left entirely to the issue of a single examination, passed at the age of twenty-one, as we take the greater majority from those cadets who pass first out of the military school of St.-Cyr.

Honestly, have we in the successful passing of this one examination the smallest guarantee of the clear judgment, of the hard-working disposition, of the zeal, ability, and military qualifications, which, according to the Prussian system, are necessary for the service which admits of 'no mediocrity?' Nevertheless, these young men are appointed staff officers, and remain so till the day of their retirement. It matters not even after their exit from school if they do not show the smallest taste for a military life, no

[1] It may easily be thought that I am exaggerating, and it may be said that Prussian staff officers who have never served in a campaign would be quite as incapable as our own of choosing the camping ground for troops. But will the practical benefit be denied of these annual tours, performed by officer-students of the Academy of War, by the staff officers of each corps under the direction of their respective chiefs, or by the head quarter staff superintended by General de Moltke himself? During these tours all the questions relating to profitable use of ground, to the camping of troops, to fortifications, are practically worked out.

qualification, if they give themselves up to habits of idleness, and live in complete ignorance. We shall confide in time of war in these incapable officers, tired of the duties which demand the utmost activity, the most capable judgment, and the most extensive knowledge.

That is what the absence of all principle brings us to. How very differently such important matters are treated in Prussia! Again, I urge that idleness and mediocrity are more tolerable in any other officer than in one on the staff. Even if we only take the physical qualifications into account, do we meet here, as in France, with staff officers who are unable to ride three miles at a gallop? I note everything that concerns the Prussian staff corps, and I am perfectly certain that General de Moltke would instantly expel any officer who was not a good horseman. He himself sets the example, and not a day passes that he does not spend some portion of it in the saddle.

It is important that it should be known in France that here 'unceasing' efforts are made to bring every detail of any institution, civil or military, to the greatest possible state of perfection. But these efforts are particularly directed to the army. It is the constant application of the great principle left by Frederick the Great to his successors: 'Prussia must always be on outpost duty.' If I might venture here to use an expression taken from turf phraseology, I should say that Prussia was in every respect 'in perfect training.'

I do not for a moment desire to pass in review all the peculiar defects in the organisation and education of our staff corps: my object is simply to set forth the reasons for which the Prussian staff is far superior to our own. But is it possible not to regret the painful position of many officers who, in the full enjoyment of all their faculties, pass

year after year in a brigade or divisional office, employed only in clerical labour, which could be equally well executed by an intelligent sergeant? What time, what abilities are thus thrown away! Is it then a matter of wonder that our officers form the subject of jokes in Austrian military journals, the truth of which can be ascertained by reading some of the numbers of the *Camarade*, published at Vienna? They call them 'prejudiced;' state that their duties are unworthy of an officer; and ridicule their behaviour on parade. As regards Prussian officers, they are as much astonished at the organisation of our staff, as they are willing to do full justice to our army on other grounds; but they find it impossible to believe that a man can make a good staff officer by the sole fact of his having passed a successful examination, after his residence at a military school, at the age of twenty-one. They think it essential that a staff officer should always be physically capable of riding several miles at a gallop; that he should be thoroughly conversant with at least one foreign language; and they frequently express their surprise to me that ours have never commanded a company, battalion, or regiment.

Now, is it needful that we should adopt the organisation of the Prussian staff? Most certainly not. It would be impossible to think of it, even if the different system of promotion did not place an insurmountable obstacle in the way. But the same problem (here it is to organise the best possible staff corps) has frequently different methods of solution, which depend on the hypotheses. Allowing that we admit the necessity of perfecting our staff corps, it becomes first necessary to know whether we admit the unassailable justice of the Prussian theory, that staff officers shall be the *élite* of the whole service. This theory recog-

nised, the application will not be fraught with any difficulty.

I shall close this despatch with the reiteration of my firm conviction that it is of the utmost importance to take immediate steps for the reformation of our staff; our inferiority being so plain, so apparent, to anyone who will give himself the trouble to study the Prussian system. Moreover, it was without any exaggeration that, after deep examination and sound reflection, I said above, 'The composition of the Prussian staff would prove, in an early war, of preponderating advantage to its army.'

I have had the opportunity when in Bohemia, and since then, to become acquainted with many facts which by their individual character could not claim a place in the official records of the war of 1866. But the truth has forced itself upon me that the Prussian arms owed a large share of their victories to the officers of the staff. It would be hardly too much to say that these officers alone directed the campaign of 1866. What facts could I not enumerate to prove that officers composing either the head quarter staff or the staff of corps d'armée or divisions showed the most positive proof of clear judgment, of true warlike ability, of an insatiable zeal! Without mentioning General de Moltke, what commander-in-chief would not consider himself fortunate to have for chief of the staff either General de Voigts-Rhetz or General de Blumenthal, officers of the greatest distinction, who filled that position during the war of 1866, the one with the First, the other with the Second, Army? And what invaluable abilities, what unbounded knowledge in all their subordinate staff officers, colonels, chefs d'escadron, and captains! I do not know one whom any general would hesitate to employ in time of war. What a guarantee, and I may almost say, what an assurance, what

tranquillity of mind, is secured to a commander-in-chief by the possession of a staff thus composed of intelligent officers, thoroughly educated and devoted to their duties!

My conviction is too firm that I should not once more speak it out: we must look with suspicion and dread at the Prussian staff.

BERLIN: *April* 25, 1868.

II.

## DISARMING.

This leads me to say a few words on a strange question, which has been frequently brought forward from time to time, and which the press is now discussing with greater vigour than ever—that of the disarming (*désarmement*) of European Powers. How little common sense is displayed in the articles on this head which the various journals throw broadcast to a greedy public! What ignorance of the institutions of foreign countries is there depicted! People do not even ask themselves what constitutes the disarming of a Power. They confound disarming with disbanding.

It is undeniable that it is no easy task to give an exact definition of the word disarming. For, first, as there are no two Powers whose military organisation is the same, it could not have the same signification for all nations. Then, if we take one Power only into consideration—France, for instance—what exactly constitutes disarming? Where should it begin and where should it end? Is it a disbanding of the troops, which is generally considered equivalent to a disarming? Again, it would be necessary to know what one should disband. Should it be a portion of the regular army or a portion of the reserves? Should the disbanding be temporary or permanent, without possibility of revocation? It all appears to be very vague.

The only exact signification of the term 'disarming' which it is possible to find common to all countries is a diminution in the effective strength of men which a Power

trains and keeps expressly for purposes of warfare. The disarming would be partial if the Power diminishes its effective strength in a certain proportion: it would be total if the Power disbanded the whole of its soldiery, and kept up only a species of *gendarmerie* for the preservation of internal order. But that which journalists completely ignore is that a total or partial disarming, which is capable of execution by France, Austria, Italy, and England, indeed by every country save one, is absolutely impossible for Prussia.

In point of fact, the term 'disarming' as applied to Prussia possesses no meaning. Why? Because of the fundamental principle of Prussian military institutions, and, one may almost say, of the social existence of the nation—the system of universal obligatory service. It requires every capable male subject to spend three years in the standing army as in a school of war, and then to serve four years in the reserve and five in the Landwehr. In other words, all the efficient youth of the age of twenty, that is to say 93,000 men (the contingent of 1868 for the North German Confederation numbered 92,846 men), enter the army every year. They are there educated and trained to the profession of arms for three years, and then are still for nine years more at the disposal of the State.

The North German Confederation has consequently, by reason of its institutions, 300,000 men, varying from twenty to twenty-three years of age, who are being brought up to warfare, in addition to 600,000 men completely trained and disciplined; total 900,000 men.

Under such conditions, how can disarming affect her? If you propose to diminish the strength of the standing army, she can make but one answer: 'It is impossible; the fundamental principle of obligatory service compels me

to enrol annually 93,000 men in the standing army. They remain in it three years. Besides, the actual effective strength of my standing army and its cadres only corresponds exactly with this imperious call.'

Would you have Prussia diminish the length of service? She might consent to do so, but this admits of explanation. In which service would you curtail the duration of liability? Shall it be in the service with the colours (three years) or with the reserve (four years)? Mark well, so long as Prussia does not diminish the duration of the total service (12 years, 20 to 32), it would be in vain for her to reduce the duration of service with the reserve. The only consequence would be that she would have men a little less trained for war, but the total must remain the same, 900,000 troops, standing army, reserves, and Landwehr. Would this change constitute a disarming? At most one could only call it a falling off in the warlike efficiency of those 900,000 men.

Let us suppose, for instance, that things have been pushed to extremities—that Prussia consents to reduce the period of service in the standing army to one year, to two years in the reserve, and consequently to nine years in the Landwehr. She would have men less well trained, a vast number of Landwehr men; but there would always be 900,000 men, all of whom had spent one year in the standing army and two years in the reserve.

A diminution of the effective total of these 900,000 men, that is a disarming, as it should be properly understood, could not therefore take place unless Prussia reduced the limit of age for the Landwehr to thirty, or say eight-and-twenty years. But this concession would be purely illusory, for, in a serious war, there would be no difficulty whatever in calling out men of 29, 30, 31, or 32

years of age, although they no longer belonged to the Landwehr.

Public attention is not sufficiently alive to the fact, that the principal benefit of the Prussian military organisation lies in the instruction and education which is given during a certain period (now three years) to every efficient youth of 20 years of age. The number of years passed in the reserve and the Landwehr only involves an additional advantage. The consequence of this rudimentary principle is that every efficient male of the whole nation is or has been a soldier in the standing army. Thus the armed forces of the North German Confederation (standing army, reserve, and Landwehr) present as a whole a most striking and peculiar aspect, standing forth alone in all Europe.

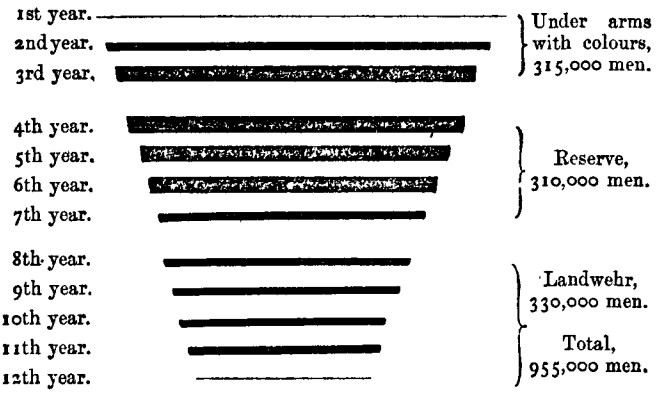
A more complete idea of the formation of this singular fabric is shown by means of the annexed diagram. One must suppose that the twelve straight lines represent, the 1st, the men of 20 years of age; the 2nd, those of 22; and the 12th, those of 32. The first three represent the standing army, the four next the reserve, and the last five the Landwehr. These lines diminish in length in order to illustrate the annual mortality and consequent loss in each contingent. It is further necessary to suppose that the thickness of the lines represents the proportional warlike efficiency of each contingent, and that the troops in the third year of regular service, with those in the first and second years of service in the reserve, are in the best possible condition for warfare, with respect both to age and military training. (Vide diagram.)

I hope thus to have shown that the application of the term 'disarming' to Prussia is devoid of any exact signification; and that, of all the European Powers, Prussia is the only one which, by virtue of its rudimentary and

primary institutions, is incapable of disarming. In order to enable Prussia to disarm, it would be necessary first to overthrow these institutions—a proposal which no one would ever think of making.

BERLIN: *April* 25, 1868.

DIAGRAM.



III.

## REMARKS ON THE PRUSSIAN ARMY.

*July* 22, 1868.

I would fain lay before your Excellency sundry arguments which might convince you of the high qualities of the Prussian army, the spirit which animates it—in a word, its moral state. I feel bound to do so in consequence of my firm conviction that France is completely ignorant of all that concerns Prussia, as regards either its people or its army. How indeed could it be otherwise, when the youth of France is developed into manhood without receiving any instruction in that most important branch of history regarding the institutions of modern peoples, their character, their talents, their peculiarities, and is not really taught any foreign language, nor even encouraged in the cultivation of a taste for study? The result is, that generation succeeds generation without anything being known of the neighbouring countries, except perhaps that they exist, that they profess this or that religion, and that their chief towns are so and so. Thus, for instance, is there anyone in France who has followed the most curious development of the Prussian nation since 1815—a nation full of vitality, which has doubled its population in fifty years, and built the edifice of its institutions on the secure foundation of two great principles —compulsory education and compulsory military service— as on two grand and indestructible pillars, has succeeded in placing itself in the van of the enlightened European nations, with a formidable army, provided with an unequalled armament, and led by the best trained and best

educated officers in the world? Is it possible that such a spectacle remained unnoticed until the day when this mighty race shot out that terrible thunderbolt in 1866? We only then began to search for the causes which brought about such great events; but already this susceptible, energetic, and unscrupulous nation, whose frontiers lie but nine days' march from the walls of Paris, numbers thirty million souls, and has a million of trained troops at its disposal.

In submitting the following reflections, which have arisen from my studies on the Prussian nation, I must hope not to render myself liable to an accusation that I am exceeding the limits of my military mission, for it is more especially in Prussia that the army and the nation are so intermingled and closely united, that the qualities of the one are found in their entirety in the other. I may add, that a close observer may learn more by living in Prussia than anyone else would by the closest perusal of whole volumes, in the same way that one gets to know a man by associating with him. Details, insignificant in appearance, sometimes mere shadows, are as useful in forming an estimate of a nation as of an individual. Close research into historical facts afterwards serves to confirm or complete the judgment arrived at.

Every unprejudiced person who is gifted with any insight will discover without difficulty the qualities which characterise the North German race—its energy, its audacity, its appreciation of its own value. The study of history confirms the opinion formed. Twice in a single century Prussia surprises and astonishes the world. Under Frederick the Great, when numbering barely four million inhabitants, she struggles gallantly for seven years against the Austrian forces, awhile allied with Russian armies,

awhile assisted by Gallic bayonets; and although Napoleon I. in his Memoirs discredited the marvellous deeds which surrounded the events of the period, they nevertheless give ample evidence of the unconquerable energy of the Prussian nation, maintained and extended by the genius of its sovereign. A century elapses, and again Prussia, with but nineteen million inhabitants, attracts the attention of the whole world in completely overthrowing Austria and her allies.

It is undeniable that these recent events exhibit in no minor degree the same boldness of design and vigorous execution.

In the interval between these two periods the Prussian nation encounters the disaster of Jena. No epoch in her history is more fitted to illustrate the energy which distinguishes her. Prussia is overwhelmed at Jena; the Emperor drives her beyond the Elbe, imposes on her crushing contributions, and unfortunately further humiliates her by exacting that she shall maintain but forty thousand men under arms. Then this manly nation, submitting to the dire yoke of necessity, falls back upon herself: she studies the causes of so deep a disaster—she resolves to free herself and to be revenged. A commission of the most distinguished generals reforms the abuses, and organises the army on the soundest principles; eminent men raise everywhere the standard of patriotism; in every district secret societies are formed to give vent to the national hatred of France; the wealthiest families set the example of making sacrifices for the national weal by giving up a portion of their fortune to the State. Assisted by the sentiments which pervade the whole nation, and led on by the hearty co-operation of men of courage and character, the Government prepares to take advantage of a favourable opportunity, evades the humiliating conditions imposed

on her by the Emperor, by unremittingly training fresh levies of the Landwehr; then in the year 1812 Prussia furnishes a contingent of 200,000 men to the Coalition; she distinguishes herself by an unparalleled fury, and pursues France with a rancour which is still as bitter as of yore in the minds of the present generation. It is impossible not to admire the energy of a people who turn a crushing disaster into a cause of regeneration. This opinion is so general that one finds it dwelt upon in the majority of Prussian publications which treat of the history of the nineteenth century. It has also been expressed to me by many distinguished men: 'It is to France,' say they, 'that we owe our awakening to our greatness. Jena caused us to reflect, and we have profited by the lesson.'

It will be easier to judge of the energy of the peoples composing the North German Confederation when the picture above depicted is compared with that which Austria presents at the same epoch. Twice in the space of four years, from 1805 to 1809, the great Emperor defeats Austria. Does she reap any profit whatsoever from the lessons thus read to her by repeated disaster? Does she recognise the necessity of fortifying herself with more solid institutions? No. This amiable and sympathetic nation, greedy of pleasure, still keeps on the highway of routine, without even entertaining against the conquerors who so humiliated her those feelings of bitter hatred which are strictly the property of vigorous races.

During the Bohemian campaign were not the theatres and public places of amusement in Vienna still open, and did not the crowd press as eagerly as ever at the barriers? He who knows the Prussian nation knows also what a different aspect Berlin would have worn if the Prussian arms had sustained a disaster.

If I have dwelt too long on the preceding comparison, my apology must be that in my judgment nothing is better suited to exhibit the solid and manly virtues of the Prussian nation, which I again repeat are exhibited through every rank of the army.

It is necessary to add to these high qualities a watchfulness, a love of progress, a spirit of application inordinately developed. To illustrate it, I will yet continue my comparisons, which, as is evident, are not favourable to France. During the last fifteen years we have had two great wars. What military lesson have we learnt? Have we endeavoured to improve one single institution, one of the branches of our service? Our rulers have evidently consoled themselves with the reflection that all was for the best, as we had been victorious, first over Russia, then over Austria. How necessary it is that we should meditate on the example Prussia is now setting us! She too was victorious in 1866. Was it a necessary consequence that her army had attained the highest pinnacle of perfection? To think so, one must indeed have a scanty knowledge of this thoughtful people, alike watchful and greedy of advancement. One might say that the campaign of 1866, since its close, has been considered by every intelligent Prussian officer simply a test of their military organisation. More than one general has already told me, 'We had not had a single great war since 1815; and as our organisation appeared good to us, we were the more anxious to give it a trial. But we committed many errors during the campaign of 1866, and we recognised the necessity of amelioration in many details.'

And in point of fact during the two years that have since elapsed a considerable work has been going on here in introducing various reforms—a work executed without

commotion, without ostentation, but with deep study, careful reflection, great determination and decision. At the Ministry of War, at the head quarters of the staff of the several corps d'armée, commissions of officers who took part in the campaign have been sitting, with a view to discuss reforms suggested by the experience gained during those eventful weeks.

Later on, I shall hope to enter into the details of the alterations that have been made. Here I will content myself with enumerating them. They are:

Re-organisation of the railway companies (companies of military engineers accustomed to lay, destroy, and work railways).

Modification of the ambulance service.

Re-organisation of the companies of bearers of the wounded from the field.

Re-organisation of the telegraphic service.

Change in the composition of the columns supplying stores to the reserve artillery.

Change in the quantity of stores supplied to infantry, cavalry, and artillery.

Increase of the cavalry force.

Extra attention brought to bear on the sword practice of the cavalry.

Establishment of a committee for fortifications.

Establishment of remount commissions.

Establishment of a model shoeing forge.

Alterations in the uniforms of the cavalry.

Establishment of two new military schools, of two new schools for cadets, of a new non-commissioned officers' school.

There remain under discussion the establishment of a school of military telegraphy, and of one of military rail-

way engineering; the reorganisation of the 'Vivandier' service, in order to provide more securely still for the nourishment of troops in the field; also the very important question of the baggage of an army. To which must still be added, what may be regarded as already executed:

The redistribution of the territory of the North German Confederation into Landwehr battalion districts.

The removal to Spandau of all artillery establishments.

The improvement in the food of the common soldier.

The increase of the pay of officers.

The constant improvements, suggested by trials and experience, which are made in land and marine artillery, as well as in small arms, &c.

If one compares this work, the result of experience gained in a victorious war, with that which we did in France after the Crimean and Italian campaigns, it is impossible to repress one's astonishment.

Speaking generally, the activity which is shown throughout the army, whether it be in the elaborate researches of the Ministry of War, of those of commissions, of those of the staff, or in the detailed or general instruction of the troops, in the execution of manœuvres, in every sort of study—the activity, I say, which is shown, is truly prodigious. No other European army shows it in a similar degree. One might term it a hive of bees. In order to understand the cause of this incessant labour, one must take into account the distinctive qualities of the nation, its sense of duty, its application, its liking for work, which are thus carried, so to say, to extremes by the necessity which all felt of completing the military instruction of the male population in a very brief space of time, as it has not exceeded two years and a half.

But these reasons would be insufficient to explain the

immense activity which prevails in the army, if one did not consider the powerful and personal influence of the King. This is a curious fact, and, as I believe, but little known abroad.

The King of Prussia, with respect to his army, occupies a position without an equivalent in any other country, Russia, perhaps, alone excepted: he is, in every sense of the word, the commander-in-chief of the army ('das Kriegsheer,' as the Germans call it). Moreover, the Monarch who now sits upon the throne of the Hohenzollerns possesses such an inordinate military passion, that even his most devoted subjects almost reproach him with it.

I was driving with General de Moltke, who accompanied the King to Paris during the Exhibition of 1867, on the day that M. Haussmann did the honours of the capital to his Majesty. The King and all the officers of his suite were thunderstruck. General de Moltke, who never says but what he thinks, turned to me and said, 'I am very glad that the King has seen all the splendour of Paris; he occupies himself almost solely with the army, but to-day he has had an opportunity of witnessing how a sovereign, without neglecting the army—for yours is excellent—can also take interest in all that adds to the greatness of his people.' 'And,' the General added, 'I am perhaps better authorised than anyone else to speak on this subject, for I, of all others, cannot complain of this predilection of the King for the army.' But in speaking thus, General de Moltke forgot that a man of seventy-two years of age changes neither his tastes nor his passions. And, in fact, the King remained after his visit to Paris the same as ever—that is to say, his preference for the army is no less marked, and his military ardour is in no way diminished. Inwardly amiable and thoughtful for others, he has learnt

to render his passion attractive and communicative. As a prince—that is during more than twenty years—he sacrificed himself entirely to military matters. Invested ten years ago with the Regency, and succeeding to the throne in 1861, he was able to use his sovereign authority to put into execution projects previously conceived and studied.

He is the instigator of all the reforms introduced into the army during the last fifteen years, and particularly of the re-organisation of 1860. It is he, and he alone, who by his boundless activity has given to the army that irresistible impulse which I dwelt upon in a previous report. This direct personal influence of the King upon the army is so great, as to suggest the thought that, under another sovereign, more than one spring of this vast machine will be more or less weakened.

It is known how active and indefatigable the King is in spite of his great age. The Prussians jokingly attribute it to the stomachic power (affaire d'estomac), which is supposed to be possessed by every Hohenzollern. Every day, and generally for several hours every day, he works either with the Minister for War or with General de Moltke, or with General de Treskow, the President of the Military Cabinet.[1]

In order to see that I do not exaggerate, it is only necessary to procure a series of Prussian newspapers, that of North Germany for instance, *Nord-Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, and to peruse in each number the portion entitled 'Hof-Journal' (Court Journal), where the daily occupations of the King are cited. Not a day passes that the same stereotyped phrases do not appear: 'The King worked with

[1] This military cabinet is very sharply criticised by the Opposition. The King is never separated from General Treskow, the President of the Cabinet: he has him with him now at Ems (at date of despatch).

the Minister for War; the King conferred with the President of the Military Cabinet,' &c.

In another point of view, the King may be considered as the permanent Inspector-General of the Army. In the month of February in each year, when the recruits have joined about three months, he commences his inspections at Berlin, at Potsdam, and at Spandau, where the Guards are garrisoned.

In mid-winter he even inspects single companies: thus, this year, when the cold was intense, he went to Potsdam to inspect as usual, most minutely, two companies of the regiment which bears his name, which made the Crown Prince say to me, 'Is not the King extraordinary? I don't know if I shall have the same zeal.' Later in the year the King inspects separately the several battalions of the Guards, of which there are twenty-seven; then follow the inspections by regiments; then by brigades, for the employment of the different arms, which take place in May.

Thus for three months the King narrowly examines the whole of the troops composing the Guard, and follows the progress of instruction in every degree. The reviews are, strictly speaking, entirely independent of these inspections.

As the Infantry of the Guard is quartered at Berlin, at Potsdam, and at Spandau, the King goes to these different places and holds eight reviews, termed parades, every winter, viz. three for the Infantry—one at Berlin, one at Potsdam, and one at Spandau; four for the Cavalry—two at Berlin and two at Potsdam (the cavalry of each of these towns turns out once on foot and once mounted); finally, one for the Artillery and Engineers. The King inspects, besides, the School of Musketry at Spandau, the Battalion of Drill Instruction at Potsdam, and the Company of Bearers of the Wounded (Krankenträger) at Berlin. I

must not forget to mention the meetings of the Military Society, which are held at Berlin every fortnight during the winter, and most of which the King attends in order to encourage the habit of study and work among the officers. It is worthy of note that at all these inspections and parades the King is accompanied by the Princes, by the principal generals, and by a crowd of officers, and frequently by ministers or civil functionaries who hold some rank in the Landwehr. If we imagine the King always attentive and amiable, full of attraction and good humour during the manœuvres, we shall understand what stimulus is given to all, from generals to privates.

I have thus been able to accompany his Majesty more than twenty times this winter. The last occasion was in the month of June, at Potsdam, where the Battalion of Drill Instruction was celebrating the anniversary of its foundation. The King, who goes thither every year with the Queen, the Princes, and Princesses, attaches great importance to this festivity, for it puts him, so to speak, in communication with the whole army.

The Battalion of Drill Instruction is composed of five or six picked men from every *infantry* regiment of the North German Confederation. These men have nearly all volunteered for more than three years' service; they spend the summer with the Battalion of Drill Instruction, and return to their respective regiments in the winter.

The object of the institution is to propagate throughout the army a favourable element for the uniformity of drill instruction; but the majority of the officers whom I have consulted on the matter ignore its efficacy, and they would willingly see the Battalion of Instruction suppressed, if its organisation had not at the same time a higher aim—that of bringing together for some months men of different regi-

ments, and especially of giving the King the opportunity of being placed in communication with representatives of the whole army. His Majesty omits nothing in the celebration of the annual festivities of the Battalion of Instruction which may add to their solemnity and apparent importance. The day's programme includes Divine service, battalion review, an extra good dinner, and evening amusements. The King, Queen, Princes, and Princesses mix with the soldiers and join in their meals.

The preceding may give some idea of the activity of the King in the winter and spring, but this activity in no way subsides in the autumn.

I annex to my report a general programme of the manœuvres which the Guards will execute from August 20 to September 13; the King will take part in them on his return from Ems. Afterwards follow the manœuvres of division against division.

In order to complete the explanation of the causes which have succeeded in imparting to the army the degree of impulse it possesses, I will add that the King is seconded in his work by all the Princes and commanders of corps d'armée, whose zeal is animated by an intense desire to please their Sovereign. It is in the month of June, as a rule, that each of them inspects the troops under his command. The Crown Prince has just completed his inspection of the 2nd corps, and Prince Frederick Charles that of the 3rd corps.

The object of these inspections of corps d'armée is to ascertain the degree of 'aptitude for war' (the term applied) which the troops have acquired. For everything else the Commanders-in-Chief refer to the generals under their command, and these again to the officers commanding regiments, who have gone through quite a different train-

ing, and have far greater responsibility than the colonels of the French army.

The officers who accompanied the Crown Prince and Prince Frederick Charles in their tours of instruction have furnished me with information, corresponding in every particular to that which I am able myself to acquire when present at the manœuvres of the troops of the Guard, either at Berlin or in the environs. Everywhere we see the same activity, the same principles which guided the troops in actual warfare. The troops are exercised in a close country, one day in one place, another day in another: the infantry practise skirmishing under different conditions; the cavalry execute reconnaissances and practise outpost and vedette duty; the artillery practise firing under every possible condition; the batteries and the targets are constantly shifted, in order that the officers may practise judging distance and the frequent laying of the guns; the cavalry and artillery are taught to clear ditches, épaulements, hedges, &c., at full gallop.

Of all the commanders in the army, that of the 3rd corps, Prince Frederick Charles, requires the least stimulus. As passionately devoted to the profession of arms as the King, he has succeeded in imparting his military ardour to the troops under his command, who place the most implicit confidence in him.

All these varied details afford, I venture to hope, an insight into the species of activity which exists in this country. In a word, the picture which Prussia presents to an observer is this: on the one hand, a nation full of spirit and energy, better educated than any other in Europe —deficient, indeed, in every amiable or generous quality, but endowed with the most solid virtues—ambitious to a fault, unscrupulous, audacious, fashioned completely after

the military model: on the other hand, a man who, during twenty years as Prince, and during ten years as Regent or Sovereign, has devoted himself exclusively to the army with a solicitude, a passion, a happy humour, so artfully combined that they form a thrice efficacious instrument. It is this army which conquered at Königgrätz.

This picture is so attractive that one can but accuse of aberration or levity those foreigners who ought to have been struck by it long before 1866. And if I have thus unhesitatingly given vent to my conviction, it is not for the mere pleasure of recrimination, but solely in the hope of prevailing upon others to share it. To disbelieve my eyes, to neglect to make known the true state of things, would not be to fulfil my mission. Again I must repeat, that in Prussia both nation and army display an energy, a discipline, a state of education, which would prove invaluable concomitants were a war with France to arise.

'We can no longer laugh at Prussia,' said Prince Napoleon to me when he was in Berlin; 'we ought never to have laughed at them; and all that ignorant people can relate of the Prussian nation will not alter the fact that she was the first to adopt rapid-loading rifles: moreover, such facts are nothing else but visible manifestations of the intelligence of a people. It is rather a curious coincidence, that once before, during the Seven Years' War, the Prussians owed a portion of their successes to an improvement in the musket: it was in the employment of the iron ramrod.'

It is much the fashion in France to praise the Austrian army beyond measure, and those who gainsay the common dictum draw upon themselves the reproach, 'In slandering the Austrian army, you detract from our glory.' This is not the question. It would only be difficult to choose among

the numerous historical facts which prove that the Austrian army, in spite of its many excellent qualities, is the least formidable in Europe. 'The Austrians have the knack of being defeated (*'la routine de la défaite'*),' so Prince Frederick Charles, who values them but little, said to me. For my part, also, I have studied and compared the Prussian and Austrian armies sufficiently during two years to venture to say with perfect assurance, 'Let us be very careful in France not to think that if war broke out we should have troops like the Austrians to oppose us. The Prussian army would confront us with a vigour, an audacity, a science of warfare, which we did not meet with in Italy.' What, for instance, would have been the issue of events in 1859 if instead of an Austrian army we had had a Prussian army opposed to us? From the very outbreak of hostilities it would have marched into Turin before a single Frenchman had crossed the Alps. At Solferino the 4th corps, in spite of its heroic efforts, would have been broken about the middle of the action. No one could any longer entertain a doubt on the subject if he knew what energy was displayed by the Prussian troops in the war of 1866—what intelligence the leaders illustrated in a thousand ways.

This war contains, among others, three such battles, that it would be difficult to cite more glorious ones in the history of any nation.

On the 18th of June, at the so-called battle of Soor, a battalion of the 2nd regiment of Grenadiers (*'Emperor Francis'*) attacked an entire Austrian brigade, consisting of seven battalions (*'Grivicic'* brigade), and in spite of terrible losses gave another Prussian battalion time to come up and to rout the seven battalions of the enemy, which were never heard of during the remainder of the campaign.

On the 3rd of July, at Königgrätz, Fransecky's division,

consisting of nine thousand men, struggled for several hours against two complete corps d'armée, and succeeded in maintaining its position. On the same day the 1st division of the infantry of the Guard took possession of the hill of Chlum, and defended it for three-quarters of an hour against the repeated though badly-directed attacks of two reserve corps d'armée, which were perfectly intact.[1]

I will conclude this despatch with a few words on the manœuvring capabilities of the Prussian army, and on the warlike intelligence and capacity which are developed among the officers by habits of work and study. There is no dissentient voice among the many foreign officers in Berlin as to the admirable precision with which the youths who compose the army manœuvre. The results which are obtained under this head, in spite of the short duration of service, are indeed astonishing.

The troops gave most astounding proofs of their manœuvring qualities during the war of 1866. Prussian generals have narrated to me many facts which occurred during the Bohemian campaign, and which, even allowing for exaggeration, are truly astonishing. They boast especially of the presence and coolness of mind with which

[1] The resistance of the 1st division of the Guard would be inexplicable if we did not know that at that time Benedek was a long way from Chlum; that the troops of the two Austrian reserve corps only attempted to retake it by detached efforts, and that a drizzling rain prevented the Austrians from knowing that they were engaged with only a single division. But the defence of Hiller's division is none the less one of the most extraordinary events of modern wars. This General had been ordered to halt near Horenowes, and there to await further orders; but irritated by certain reproaches which the Prince of Würtemberg, the commander of the Guard, had uttered against him on June 28, at the commencement of the action at Soor, he disobeyed, and threw himself, with the whole of his division, against the hill of Chlum, in order to re-establish his reputation.

their soldiery closed up in proportion to the vacancies made in the ranks by the fire of the enemy. At the battle of Skalitz, the 47th infantry regiment were advancing in line, drums beating, under a terrific hail of artillery projectiles, to engage the troops of the Austrian general Fragern. The precision, the tranquillity with which the Prussians advanced were so striking that the Austrian general, indulging in the common belief that Prussian troops were at best only fitted for parade, disdainfully cried out before his troops, 'Behold the dirty swine—they think they are on parade'! He was killed; and his exclamation, reported by his aide-de-camp, who was taken prisoner, has become historical in the Prussian army.

Would the Prussian troops maintain their regularity before the *élan* of our soldiers? I cannot say. Unfortunately we have in France a school of officers who deny the utility of precise movements, and who go so far as to advocate the principle of disordered impetuosity. Please God our generals will remember what Napoleon I. wrote on the subject of manœuvres, and rely completely on the judgment of a leader whose soldiers certainly possessed quite as much *élan* as those of the present day. Our impetuous confusion was successful against the Austrians, but it might well be otherwise against firm and compact troops like the English or the Prussians, and regrets would come too late.

As regards warlike science, intelligence, and capacity, I have already said that they are thoroughly developed in Prussian generals. Proofs abound; but I will content myself with giving a very characteristic comparison, which was suggested to me by the study of the war of 1866, and which refers to the method of dividing corps d'armée. Napoleon I. wrote: 'The limit of human faculty is such,

that no general is capable of commanding upon the same theatre of operations more than five distinct units.' Well, what did we see in 1866? Benedek had at his disposal 7 Austrian corps d'armée, the Saxon army, 4 divisions of cavalry, and a reserve artillery; total, 13 units. Did he dream of forming them into armies? In no way. He pretended to be capable of giving direct and positive orders (without an intermediary) to each of the 13 separate corps. What incoherence, what repeated waste of time, what orders and counterorders resulted therefrom in this short campaign, so disastrous to Austria!

And what a contrast with the dispositions made at Berlin! There 3 armies, that is to say, only 3 units, received orders emanating from the royal head quarters; each of the commanders of armies maintaining all freedom of execution, and only having to regulate the movements of 4 or 5 units or corps d'armée. All was simple and logical.

Extraordinary fact! Austria in 1859 and 1866 commits two faults, the one contrary to the other. In 1859 she forms two separate armies, which is undoubtedly one of the worst possible dispositions, as it furnishes neither wings nor centre without disjointing great commands. On the other hand, she adopts in 1866 a yet more pernicious principle, that of 13 separate units, devoid of communication.

Do not such things show clearly the superior intelligence of the Prussian over the Austrian army?—for if in the latter service the officers of rank ignore the essential principles of war, such as the Great Captain delighted to publish in his Memoirs, what can we expect from officers in subordinate positions?

As is evident, all that I have said upon the Prussian army, and particularly upon its superiority over the

Austrian, is but the clearest result of the study of facts, combined with that of the character and institutions of the two peoples. I defy any officer who would wish to compare and to think out the matter not to be struck with it. He must recognise in the Prussian army, which contains the intelligence and the moral power of the whole nation, first the peculiar qualities of the North German race, its energy, its audacity, its discipline, its sense of duty and of dignity; then its unitedness, its education, its skill in manœuvring, its excellent armament, its staff corps (the best educated in Europe), the warlike capacity which study and application develop in its officers; all these being things which are not met with, or are met with in a minor degree, in the Austrian army.

It is almost needless to add, that the military events of the year 1866 have but intensified in the Prussian army the feeling of its own value; but long before this time nothing was omitted which was calculated to give the army confidence in itself, to cause it to be honoured, to surround it with every possible consideration. All favours are reserved for it, and everything tends to give it, in the eyes of the nation and in public opinion, the character of a fundamental institution—I was almost saying of a sacred institution; for there is no military musical air, not even the 'Retreat,' which is totally devoid of a religious character; and during Divine service it is first for the King and his army that the minister invokes the blessing of the Most High; the great legislative bodies of the State are only subsequently cited.

And this fact which I have just stated is accompanied by that calm dignity, by those sentiments of strong conviction, which so essentially characterise this serious and

energetic people, whose territory stretches from the Vistula to the Rhine.

What a contrast with the situation of the army in France, which is nothing but a conglomeration of fortune-forsaken men, among whom discipline and military spirit decline more and more!

BERLIN: *July* 22, 1868.

IV.

## MILITARY ORGANISATION OF PRUSSIA.

French journals show what astoundingly erroneous notions exist in France of the military organisation of Prussia. The object of my present task is to detail the general features of this organisation. It will be necessary, first, to consider that of 1814, which has lasted, with a few minor changes, for forty-five years; then to point out the important reformations which were executed in 1859 and 1860.

### *Organisation of* 1814.

After our misfortunes in 1814, Prussia had a population of ten millions, with a budget of two hundred and seventy million francs. With such means it was impossible for her to maintain a permanent army equal to that of the neighbouring great Powers. Consequently the officers appointed to organise the military forces of the kingdom strove to compensate for the scarcity of men and money by the application of principles of morality and justice; they ordained 'obligatory service for every subject.'

Witnesses of the important services rendered by the Landwehr in 1813 and 1814, thanks to its unbounded patriotism, the commissioners carried out a second (evidently erroneous) principle, viz. that men who, during their youth, have served a certain time with the colours, are capable, when called out for war, of amalgamation with regular troops. Whence the foundation of the Landwehr in 1814. In consequence of this fallacious theory, the army was essentially destined to become during peace the great school of war of the nation.

One may say that its object was to create 'Landwehr men.' It was decided that each annual contingent should serve a certain time in the standing army. But what should be the duration of service? Three years were considered as ample to give every man a necessary military training. It is difficult to recognise that this was the true belief of the organisers, for the probability is that such a brief term of service was forced upon them by the twofold influence of the annual contingent (40,000 men in 1814) and the small portion of the revenue which Prussia was able to allot for the maintenance of her forces (ninety-four million francs).

But whatever the reason was, they fixed upon three years as the duration of effective service. After the lapse of these three years, the men served for two years in the Reserve, and then passed on to the Landwehr. The law of September 3, 1814, respecting obligatory service, and the regulations of November 21, 1815, regarding the Landwehr, ordained that every efficient male should belong,

To the standing army 5 years (3 effective service, 2 reserve), from 20 to 25.

To the Landwehr (1st ban) 7 years, from 25 to 32; (2nd ban) 7 years, from 32 to 39.

1. *Permanent Army.*—The annual contingent, composed of every efficient youth of twenty years of age, numbered 40,000 men: therefore the standing army consisted of treble the number, i.e. 120,000 men, and including officers, workmen, &c., about 130,000 men. It contained

45 regiments of infantry,
10 battalions of rifles,
38 regiments of cavalry,
9 regiments of artillery,
3 divisions of pioneers (engineers and pontooneers).

2. *The Reserve.*—The troops of the reserve should have numbered 80,000 men (twice 40,000): but mortality and the necessity of leaving a portion of the reserve at the dépôts reduced the number to 60,000; which, in time of war, being united to the 130,000 men above enumerated, made a total of 190,000.

3. *The Landwehr* (1st ban) consisted of men between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-two. In time of war it should number 150,000 men: divided into thirty-six regiments of infantry and thirty-four of cavalry, of which but very weak cadres were retained in time of peace; the remainder of the force being on furlough. The Landwehr possessed neither artillery, engineer, nor rifle troops. These corps, estimated at 20,000 men, were distributed throughout the army when it was mobilised.

Two regiments of cavalry or infantry composed a brigade. In 1852, however, a regiment of the Line was added to each brigade.

The Permanent army and the first ban of the Landwehr were the troops who were destined to be actively employed during a campaign. By the preceding figures the total strength should be 360,000 men, but 30,000 were detached to garrison the kingdom: the available force was therefore 330,000 men.

The dépôt troops numbered 50,000 men. They were composed of recruits and a portion of the Reserve.

4. *Landwehr* (2nd ban).—No cadres were retained. In time of war it furnished 110,000 men (infantry and cavalry), which, with the above-named 30,000, were employed in the interior of the kingdom.

Thus we find that the disposable military forces of Prussia, obtained by this first organisation, consisted of:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| A.—Field Army, including— | | |
| 1. Permanent army . . . . | 150,000 | |
| 2. Reserves . . . . . | 60,000 | |
| 3. Rifles, engineers, and artillery | | |
| 4. Infantry and cavalry of the 1st ban of the Landwehr . . . . | 150,000 | |
| | 360,000 | |
| Detached to garrison fortresses . . | 30,000 | |
| Field army . . . . . | | 330,000 |
| B.—Dépôt troops (recruits, Landwehr, 1st ban) . . . . . | | 50,000 |
| C.—Forces available for interior defence: | | |
| 1. 2nd ban of Landwehr . . . | 110,000 | |
| 2. Above cited . . . . . | 30,000 | |
| | | 140,000 |
| | | 520,000 |

Of these 520,000 men, representing one-twentieth of the Prussian population, but one-fourth belonged to the paid standing army. The authors of the system thought that they had thus mastered the problem of the best military organisation for Prussia: they had established an economical army in time of peace, but numerous in time of war.

What are the leading characteristics of this organisation? The standing army is not made an independent military force, capable of executing the chief operations of a war. Too weak numerically to play such a part—since, including the Reserves, it numbers but 190,000 men—the necessary war strength is only obtained by its union with 170,000 Landwehr troops, which consist of nearly half the whole force. The standing army had therefore but one aim, that of forming a school of instruction for the nation, or in other words for the Landwehr. In short, the organisation of 1814 was based on the Landwehr system.

### *Errors of the Organisation of* 1814.

The errors of this organisation are so apparent that we wonder how it could possibly have lasted forty-five years. They showed themselves in a most deplorable manner during the campaigns of 1848 and 1849 in Schleswig and the Grand-Duchy of Baden, and in the mobilisations of 1850 and 1859.

The principal fault was the obligation of brigading 170,000 of the Landwehr with the regular army in time of war. Experience proved that, reckoning for various losses, it was necessary, to complete this number, to take the men of seven years of the first Landwehr ban (those between twenty-five and thirty-two). How was it possible to rely in time of war on men who had left the service, some two, some three, and some nine years previously, and of which half were married?—for Prussian statistics tell us that the percentage of men who marry is,

30 per cent. between 25 and 26,
46 „ „ „ 29 „ 30,
63 „ „ „ 31 „ 32.

We must add that a large number of these men were forced to abandon their families, who being deprived of all means of subsistence were entirely dependent on the charity of the municipalities.

The Landwehr answered, with the greatest discontent, the call to arms in 1848, 1850, and 1859. The most disgraceful scenes took place: cases of open insubordination, even before the enemy, were not unfrequent. Even the Landwehr troops who remained faithful proved themselves to be totally inefficient. These events show that the army organisers of 1814 were mistaken when they thought that

the Landwehr would always be animated by the same enthusiasm as in 1813.

Another error of this organisation lay in the composition of brigades. As each brigade contained two regiments, one of the Line and the other of the Landwehr, it was impossible to form when necessary solid corps (brigades or divisions) which would not include some of the Landwehr.

Again, the defective education and training of Landwehr commissioned and non-commissioned officers rendered it necessary to transfer a large number of those of the Line to the Landwehr, and *vice versâ*. These numerous changes, which were necessary when war broke out, formed a serious obstacle to efficiency.

Finally, we must not omit to charge against the organisation of 1814 the enormous expenditure which a mobilisation imposed on the municipalities, who were obliged to support the needy families of the Landwehr men. In 1859 they had to provide for the wants of more than fifty-five thousand families, at a monthly cost of a million of francs. In 1850 the sum amounted to two millions a month, exclusive of private donations, which produced as much again.

The above-named inconveniences were alone sufficiently serious to render a reorganisation of the army imperative. It was begun in 1859, and continued throughout the following years, in spite of the well-known conflict which since then has divided the Prussian Government and the Parliament.

*Reorganisation of* 1860.

Before consulting on the means of remedying the errors of the old organisation, the officers charged with that duty determined to apply rigorously the system of obligatory service, which had been constantly infringed since 1814. In fact, although the Prussian population had increased

with unparalleled rapidity, viz. from ten millions to eighteen millions in forty-five years, the effective strength of the standing army remained the same, 130,000 to 140,000 men, thus rendering it impossible to levy more than 40,000 men annually—the same contingent as was supplied in 1815.

The result was that every year a considerable number of efficient young men were not enrolled, and that, in 1859 for instance, when the whole contingent numbered 63,000, more than a third were exempted. The injustice of this arrangement was especially apparent when the army was mobilised, for Landwehr men between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-two found themselves sent up to the front, while youths from twenty to twenty-five took no share in the defence of the land.

The reorganisers determined to reintroduce before all things the fundamental principle of obligatory service. It was agreed that the entire annual contingent of 60,000 men should enter the army for the same period as formerly, viz. three years. By these means the standing army received a considerable augmentation in strength. An augmentation of 'cadres' was also a necessary consequence: so were established

36 new regiments of infantry,
10 battalions of fusiliers,
10 regiments of cavalry,
5 divisions of artillery.

The standing army, formerly numbering 130,000 men, was thus increased to 210,000. Prussia was able to maintain it without difficulty, as the revenue had risen from two hundred and seventy million to four hundred and eighty-seven million francs since 1814.

Attention was next turned to the remedying of the errors of the old organisation. The Landwehr was retained, but

its *rôle* and character were completely altered. They decided that 'it should no longer form an integral part of the field army.' Up to that time half the army was composed of the 1st ban of the Landwehr; in future its duties were to be confined 'to the internal defence of the country,' that is to say the task set apart for the 2nd ban by the organisation of 1814.

In order to bring the effective strength of the field army to the necessary number of 370,000 men, the duration of service in the Reserve was raised from two to four years. It was agreed that all men eligible for service should belong:

To the Field Army 7 years (3 years effective service, 4 years Reserve), 20 to 27.

To the Landwehr (1st ban) 5 years (27 to 32).

To the Landwehr (2nd ban) 7 years (32 to 39).

Before we proceed farther, let us compare the organisation of 1814 with that of 1860.

Their common points are:

1. Obligatory service for every subject.
2. Military training during a certain time in the standing army.
3. Compulsory liability to further service until a certain age, first in the Reserve, then in the Landwehr.

Regarding the differences, they are striking. In the organisation of 1814 the standing army was nothing, taking all in all, but the national school of war. To bring it up to its war strength it was necessary to double its effective strength with Landwehr regiments, composed of men from 25 to 32 years of age, unused to service, and of whom half were married.

In the organisation of 1860, the standing army is also the national school of war; but it forms the field army in-

dependently, by the simple incorporation of the Reserve. 'The Landwehr does not appear in it in any shape;' its *rôle* is entirely confined to the garrisoning of the interior. Such is the principal amelioration of the former organisation. Prussia has thereby gained in the possession of a more numerous Field Army, composed entirely of men between 20 and 27 years of age. The men from 28 to 32, who are for the most part married and settled, needed no longer to dread being called out for every mobilisation or any ordinary war. Charged with the defence of the country, they knew that they would only have to fight and assist the Field Army in extreme cases. As is evident, the result was favourable to the main interests of the country, and especially to agriculture.

People in France seem to think that the Landwehr plays the same part now as before the reorganisation. Because the Landwehr took part in the Danish war, and more recently in the Bohemian campaign, they seem to think that it forms a portion of the army, and that they fight side by side. This requires some explanation.

The decision which fixed the duration of service in the Reserve at four years was put into force in October 1860 (it is in October that the annual contingent is enrolled): consequently, the service in the Reserve of the several contingents is—

For the contingent of 1859, from October 1862 to October 1864.

For the contingent of 1860, from October 1863 to October 1867.

For the contingent of 1861, from October 1864 to October 1868.

For the contingent of 1862, from October 1865 to October 1869.

For the contingent of 1863, from October 1866 to October 1870.

Accordingly, at the time of the last war, in June 1866, Prussia only had the reserves of 1863, 1864, and 1865 at her disposal. It was for this reason that she was obliged to have recourse to the Landwehr to complete the battalions of the army. About a thousand Landwehr men were allotted to every battalion of a thousand men. But it is especially desirable to take notice that she would not have adopted this course if the reserves of four years had been available. It is only from the present time (end of 1866) that the full effects of the reorganisation of 1860 are experienced, and Prussia now disposes of the reserves of four consecutive years. In the main, she will not resort again to the Landwehr to make up the battalions or squadrons of the army; she will only do so to organise special services, such as railway companies, companies of bearers of the wounded, telegraphic companies, &c.

It is therefore very important to remember that Prussia enters from the present moment (end of 1866) into the full enjoyment of the military resources which she created for herself by the organisation of 1860. The total of her forces (exclusive of the recent annexations) may thus be set down:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| A.—Field Army, consisting of: | | |
| 1. The standing army . . . | 210,000 | |
| 2. The reserves of 4 years . . . | 160,000 | |
| | | 370,000 |
| B.—Dépôt troops (recruits and portion of reserves) . . . . . | | 110,000 |
| C.—Troops charged with the internal defence, Landwehr (1st ban) . . . | | 150,000 |
| | Total | 630,000 |

exclusive of the 2nd ban of the Landwehr, which could furnish, in case of need, from 150,000 to 200,000 men.[1]

Thus Prussia can place on foot a Field Army of 370,000 men, exclusive of 110,000 dépôt troops, total 480,000 men, without recourse to the Landwehr. It provides an effective strength more than sufficient for such mobilisations as those of 1850 and 1859, or for ordinary wars such as those of Baden or Denmark. But if Prussia had a great war for which her Field Army would not suffice, or if she sustained a disaster, she would make use of the 1st ban of the Landwehr, either for supplying losses, or as a second line. She would then have recourse to this 1st ban, commencing with the youngest (from 27 to 29 or 30). In the last war, for instance, in which Prussia was obliged to deploy considerable forces, several battalions and regiments of Landwehr were included in the army of the 'Ulain'; two divisions of Landwehr occupied Saxony, and the infantry division of the Landwehr of the Guard, consisting of 12 battalions (about 10,000 men), entered Bohemia and was joined to the Field Army on July 2. On July 3, during the battle of Königgrätz, this division was a day's march in rear, and it would have been able to render important services on the morrow, if the Prussians had obtained a doubtful victory or if they had been defeated. This infantry division of the Landwehr of the Guard is one of the most splendid bodies of men one could possibly see. Exclusively composed of picked men

[1] Baron Stoffel's despatch is dated November 1866. He has not reckoned the three provinces which Prussia annexed, and where she was already beginning to establish her military system. Now Prussia, aggrandised by the other States of the North German Confederation, has a force of 960,000 men, in spite of the reduction of liability to service from nineteen to twelve years by the suppression of the 2nd ban of the Landwehr. [Note by the Translator].

from 27 to 30 years of age, manly and robust in physique, it presents a magnificent appearance. It is doubtful whether it could undergo the fatigues of a long campaign, but well handled in any given circumstance it would be an invaluable auxiliary.

V.

## THE GARDE NATIONALE MOBILE OF FRANCE.

*Military Despatch of August* 12, 1869.

1. 'On the Law of February 1, 1868, on the Recruitment of the Army, and the Organisation of the Garde Nationale Mobile.'

In compliance with the request of the Minister for War to inform his Excellency what is thought in Prussia of the new Military Organisation Law of February 1, 1868, and more especially of the establishment of the Garde Nationale Mobile, I beg to continue my brief and hurried remarks in my despatch of March 29, 1868, on that most important subject.

When the law was promulgated last year, it was first thought at Berlin that its measures were calculated to augment the military resources of France; but after a more searching examination this first idea has been considerably modified. In Prussia, where the application of the principle of obligatory service has thrown out such extensive roots, and has so powerfully contributed to the greatness of the country, most people are of opinion that our new law of military organisation is a progress, in the sense that it implies, although only in time of war, the adoption of that same moral and just principle of obligatory service for every subject. But people do not understand how the legislator, after having admitted it, is unable to apply it; for in point of fact the law does not sanction the slightest military training being given to the Garde Na-

tionale Mobile. It is also looked upon as a nonsensical or imperfect measure, which, far from adding to the power of France, will produce nothing but an enfeeblement of its resources. As will be shown, this appreciation of our new law of military organisation, an appreciation arrived at here by a practical and thoughtful people, is unfortunately but too true.

This law, after having placed at the disposal of the country, as an auxiliary to the Field Army, a supplementary force of more than 500,000 men, under the name of 'Garde Nationale Mobile,' contains the following unjustifiable article (Article 9):

> The young men composing the 'Garde Nationale Mobile' are subject, unless legitimately absent—
>
> 1. To manœuvres which take place in the canton in which the individual resides.
> 2. To meetings by companies or battalions, which take place in the circumscription of the company or battalion.
> 3. Each drill or meeting cannot require the presence 'for more than one day' of the youths who are called thereto.

These drills or meetings cannot take place more than fifteen times in the course of the year. One is struck dumb at the thought that such a ridiculous measure could possibly have been proposed and seriously discussed by the Houses of the Legislature of a great country, and that there should be a Government which consents to accept it, and introduce it as law.

Is it possible that there was not one single man in those assemblies to say to his colleagues, 'But this law that you are about to pass is nothing but a snare: you are deceiving yourselves without knowing it, and you are deceiv-

ing France. What! do you really mean to add several hundred thousand young men to her military forces under the name of "Garde Nationale Mobile," and deprive them at the same time of all opportunity of training? For, what military training do you suppose a man can undergo who in the majority of departments and "in a single day" will have to walk two or three leagues from his abode to the rendezvous, the same distance to return home in the evening, and who in addition, all in one day, will have to attend roll calls, parades of every kind, issue of clothing, &c., &c.? Do you not recognise that it is materially impossible to find in that one single day even a short quarter of an hour which could really be devoted to military training? If you do not consider it your duty to occupy the time (accorder un déplacement) of the young men composing the Garde Mobile for more than a single day, then alter the project completely, and simply revert to the law of 1832; for, once more, that which has been brought up for your sanction is impracticable and contrary to common sense.'

Such a speaker, to carry the House with him, would, I suppose, have only needed to relate how things are managed in Prussia at the trainings of the Reserve and the Landwehr. Here I shall say nothing original: I shall confine myself to stating that which is known by every officer and man of the Prussian army.

In Prussia, the Reserve and Landwehr men, who live at home and work at their respective professions, are liable, during the period of their service in the Reserve or the Landwehr, to trainings, in order to keep up the military education which they previously received during three years' service with the colours.

In accordance with the sixth and seventh paragraphs of

the law of November 9, 1867, every man of the Reserve is bound to take part, during his service in that force, in two trainings, neither of which must exceed a fortnight; and the men of the infantry of the Landwehr can be called out, during their service therein, to drills, either by companies or by battalions, each of which lasts eight or fourteen days.

The fortnight is thus spent:

On the first day the men leave home in the morning and repair to the centre of the district, where the drills take place, which is generally a journey of about seven or eight miles (English). When they arrive at the place of rendezvous they answer to their names, and proceed then to the clothing store, where their uniform is issued to them; thence to the armoury, where they receive their rifles and accoutrements. These several operations, which take far more time than one would at first suppose, are not over till pretty late in the afternoon, and this first day is never used to drill men fatigued by so many necessary journeys.

And yet more: the second day is also frequently lost for drill; for it happens sometimes that the assembling, the mustering, and the various issues cannot be completed the first day. To which it may be well to add, that men coming from different parts of the district, and glad to meet each other after the lapse of a longish time, come together in the evening, where they sing and drink,—a course not conducive to the steadiness or utility of manœuvres on the morrow. The officers are generally very lenient on this score: they look upon the second day as lost for drills or manœuvres; and they only begin them on the third day.

That is the course of things in Prussia, a country long since accustomed to these annual drills. The men, as has

just been shown, spend the whole of the first day in assembling, in mustering, in taking their meals, in receiving their clothing, their armament and equipment, and consequently the drills cannot begin till the second or even till the third day.

Is it not apparent now that in France the young men composing the Garde Nationale Mobile, who are called out for training in the cantons of their abodes, or assembled for battalion or company drill, will have to undergo on the first day just exactly the fatigue endured by the men of the Prussian Reserve or Landwehr,—in other words, that they will have to walk a certain distance (which will generally be six or seven miles) to rendezvous at the appointed place, and then to attend parades, roll calls, and various issues of arms, clothing, &c.? If one thinks that the ninth article of the new law requires that after these several operations the men shall travel the same distance as they accomplished in the morning to return to their homes, one must recognise that it is impossible for any drill to be taught in that day.

More is not required to prove that the establishment of the Garde Nationale Mobile is delusive, so long as Article 9 remains in force. But is it thought that the Garde Nationale Mobile will be of service in time of war? If so, it is sufficient to reply: If the war is of short duration, or if France is defeated from the very first, or if she be suddenly invaded, how then will you be able to impart the necessary cohesion, discipline, and training to those youths suddenly brought together?

Therefore our new law of military organisation, as far as it concerns the Garde Nationale Mobile, is totally condemned by even ordinary common sense. And in spite of this, the law has been passed by the Legislature! A great nation

has thus been capable of giving by means of its representatives 500,000 men for the defence of the country, but deprives them, by a stroke of the pen, of, so to say, all means of obtaining military training. I do not believe that any assembly in any country ever gave such flagrant proofs of incompetence and levity.

It is impossible, after this, to be surprised that we are severely criticised abroad. It is impossible to be astonished that here, and throughout Germany, the French nation is accused of ignorance, of presumption, and of vanity, and that the fall of the Latin races is proclaimed with an ill-concealed joy, even in seriously written books. I positively declare that every intelligent and studious officer (of whom there are many in the Prussian army), with whom I have discussed our new military law, judges it with practical common sense, and considers it simply as a barren work; and I venture to affirm, without being absolutely able to prove it, that the important officials, who follow most closely French military matters, are delighted at the enfeeblement of the army which the application of the new law will produce.

But we have not been content with making a defective law—we deceive ourselves by presumption as much as by ignorance in affirming it to be perfect and superior to all. It is a sad thing to say, but nevertheless, to anybody who has lived abroad, and followed the moral and intellectual development of other peoples during the last fifty years, it is true that the French nation, in spite of its eminent qualities, errs especially by ignorance and by presumption; each of these defects contributing to the support of the other. It is impossible not to recur more frequently to these two expressions the more one compares France with other countries, and especially with Prussia, so educated, so serious, so alive to its own interests.

One proof, among a thousand, is given to me, by all that is said and written in France on the new military law, and more especially on the establishment of the Garde Nationale Mobile. They say in military and other journals, and in the army, that the Garde Nationale Mobile will be a valuable accession of strength to France, and that it will equal, if it does not even surpass, the Landwehr of the North German Confederation. It is dreadful to deceive oneself thus by lack of education, or to lie to oneself by presumption; and my duty compels me to note such dangerous errors, for the people, ignorant and vain, is only too prone to believe that which flatters its conceit.

I look upon this duty as the more imperative, because I believe a war between France and Prussia to be inevitable, as I shall endeavour to demonstrate later on. I will say, then, that no comparison can be made between the Landwehr, consisting entirely of old soldiers in the prime of life, disciplined, admirably armed, and the Garde Nationale Mobile, composed of lads, to whom the law refuses to impart any military training. Perhaps it may not be futile here to repeat, with respect to the Landwehr, that which I stated in several of my reports to the Minister.

The Landwehr is not, as so many people in France suppose it to be, a sort of national guard, fashioned like our own, nor a body consisting of old soldiers, long disused to service, and for the most part married. As is known, every efficient subject of the North German Confederation is liable to military service for twelve years (from 20 to 32), namely

Three years with the colours (20 to 23);
Four years in the Reserve (23 to 27);
Five years in the Landwehr (27 to 32);

which gives twelve contingents to the Federal forces. The

first seven contingents form the Field Army, while the five latter, which are called Landwehr, are employed in the defence of the interior, and are combined only in extreme cases with the Field Army.

The men of the Reserve and of the Landwehr are on furlough, and live at their homes. Both can be married without leave. The number of marriages is very restricted in the Reserve, as the men are aware that they will be the first called upon in the event of a mobilisation; they are more numerous in the Landwehr. I gave, in a previous despatch, the proportion of married men in each service.

The Reserve are liable, during their time of service in that force, to be called out for two trainings, each of which must not last more than a fortnight; and the men of the infantry of the Landwehr can be called out twice during their five years, by companies or by battalions, each training not to last more than eight or fourteen days.

The North German Confederation numbered, in 1870, more than 320,000 Landwehr.

I have repeated these principal points in order to show thoroughly that these 320,000 Landwehr men are all made soldiers, who, having served three years with the colours (from 20 to 23), and having there acquired military spirit, discipline, and sound training, which Prussia knows how to give her troops, then returned to their homes for four years (23 to 27), during which care is taken to confirm and maintain these acquired qualities. It must not, indeed, be forgotten that a portion of the Reserve is called out every year, in order to make up the effective strength of battalions, squadrons, or batteries, during the autumn manœuvres, and that another portion is called out for the above-named eight or fourteen days' training.

One might say that the Landwehr was entirely composed

of soldiers of seven years' service, of which the greater portion were unmarried. The Landwehr men are in the very prime of life (from 27 to 32), accustomed to drills and manœuvres, fired with *esprit de corps*, and who carry into their families the spirit of order and economy, the sense of duty, the deference to laws and authority—no pains being spared to develop these qualities among the men of the Federal army.

The Prussian Landwehr proved its value in 1866, and more than one officer has acknowledged to me that he would as soon command Landwehr troops as troops of the Field Army.

After this, how is it possible to compare the Landwehr with the Garde Nationale Mobile, composed of lads, whom the law itself, by an impracticable clause, has placed in a position in which it is impossible to learn either drill or manœuvres, and of whom it is thought that the military training can be improvised during war? We must make the best of it now that the law is passed; but the Garde Nationale Mobile will be a dead letter so long as Article 9 exists in its actual state.

Even were it altered so as to admit of the training lasting a week or a fortnight, instead of one day, it would still be impossible to compare the Garde Mobile to the Prussian Landwehr.

It is, therefore, sad to think that such comparisons are made openly, or even officially, in France; and that in stating that the Garde Nationale Mobile will make a redoubtable force, better than the Prussian Landwehr, one deceives oneself as well as the public, whom it would be so important to enlighten on that head.

VI.

## ON THE PROBABILITY OF WAR.

Hitherto I have always taken care not to exceed the duties of my military post, in abstaining from all political questions in my despatches to the Minister for War. But the Emperor having been pleased to ask me, at the time of my last visit to Paris, to give my opinion on the probability of war with Prussia, I shall here offer a few purely personal ideas, fit to complete and to give exact significance to those which I expressed verbally.

The principal points which I wish to establish are the following:

(1) That war is inevitable, and at the mercy of a single incident;

(2) That Prussia has no intention of attacking France: she desires war in no way, and will do all she can to avoid it;

(3) But Prussia is sufficiently clear-sighted to recognise that the war which she does not wish for must inevitably break out, and she is making every effort not to be taken unprepared on the day when the fatal incident will occur;

(4) That France, by indifference, by levity, and especially by ignorance of the situation, is not so clear-sighted as Prussia.

### (1) *That War is inevitable.*

Prussia, no less by its ambition than by the conscious-

ness of its strength, has long looked upon itself as predestined to unite and rule over Germany. This tendency was revealed through every phase of its history, and principally since 1813, at the time when, of all the German nations, she was the most energetic in procuring the common freedom. It qualifies itself by a name which exactly characterises its tendencies in calling itself the Kernel of Germany ('der Kern Deutschlands'), and one must admit that she merits this appellation in virtue of the energy of the race which lives in her, by her education, by the solid qualities, and by the persevering efforts, which have placed her, in many points of view, in the first rank of the Powers.

*Military Despatch of August* 12, 1869.

Until 1866, when Prussia contained only eighteen million inhabitants, her supremacy in Germany was very limited, first on account of the small number of the population; and, secondly, on account of her narrow territory, which brought her down to a second-rate Power. But suddenly this Power comes to itself, and electrifies the world by the thunderbolt of 1866. 'Hercules' feels that he is a man. Immediately this desire to dominate over every German race knew no bounds; that which was only an aspiration became an article of faith; and now the wish for German unity prevails, and will prevail throughout Prussia, in spite of all that may happen. It must not be thought that this wish is capable of variation or weakness: on the contrary, it is thoroughly ingrafted, and will only acquire strength with time.

This incontestable fact admitted, there is another which at once arrests attention. If one wonders why Prussia did

not take possession of all the German States after the battle of Königgrätz, or why she does not now show more boldness in uniting the Southern States with the Northern Confederation, everybody will reply, 'Because she dreads a war with France.' And, indeed, to whichever side Prussia looks, she sees nothing but France impeding her in the fulfilment of her designs. One must consider that the Prussian nation is full of pride, of vigour, and of ambition; that she possesses, to the last degree, a sense of her own value; that, historically, she considers France as her sworn enemy; and it will be easy to picture an idea of the distrust, of the bitterness, and even hatred, which the events of 1866 caused her to feel towards France.

It would be more accurate to say that these events only developed the feelings I have just described, for they have always existed. An attentive observer will discern them immediately, in the same way that he will easily appreciate the nature of Prussia's dispositions regarding France. I shall, perhaps, succeed in giving a more definite idea of these dispositions if I suppose the Prussian nation to be divided into three groups or fractions.

Those who form the first group (which is certainly the least numerous) feel towards France a double sentiment of hatred and envy, in the full acceptation of both words. These bitter enemies of France are found chiefly in the old provinces of the Prussian monarchy (those in the North and East), among the descendants of the families who were directly engaged in the events from 1806 to 1815; or who, having suffered most by the French occupation, felt the more rigorously the humiliating conditions imposed upon Prussia after Jena. They pursue France with a blind hatred, which exists in spite of everything; and although their ancestors entered Paris twice, they do not consider

themselves avenged, and still burn with eagerness to humiliate or even to annihilate France.

The second fraction is more numerous. It includes all those who entertain the sentiments I have just described, but in a certain degree weakened. Like the first, they have not pardoned France for the humiliations to which she subjected Prussia; but with them the hatred and envy are diminished. It would be more accurate to say that they do not love France, and that they are jealous of her.

The Prussians in the third group are also very numerous. They are principally business men, merchants or people whose profession is opposed to the grudges and rivalries of peoples. They show no antipathy, no evil wish for France; they would even be content that good relations should exist between the two countries; but in their Prussian capacity they are jealous of the greatness of their country, and desirous of seeing her accomplish her 'mission' (the term used in Prussia), viz. of German unification, and on that account France is at least in the way, as the only opponent to the execution of her projects. This explains why the third fraction of the Prussian people, the best disposed towards us, is, nevertheless, infected with a feeling of uneasiness and suspicion.

The foregoing remarks, which I believe to be accurate, show briefly that France, far from having sympathy in Prussia, is rather an object of hatred for some, of jealousy for others, and of distrust and uneasiness for all.

I wish to lay great stress on the general feeling of disquietude and uncomfortableness which alienates her now from all Prussia, and which is the fatal result of the events of 1866. The uneasiness is perhaps deeper than in France. Everybody feels more or less that the state of affairs is only provisional; doubt and fear are in every mind; business

is dull, and trade stagnant. The general feeling which is the result expresses itself in these words: 'All would change if France did not interfere with our affairs.'

A hundred accusations are thus uttered against France. She is abused for the part she took during the armistice of 1866, in preventing Prussia from dictating peace in Vienna; for her jealousy of the victories of the Prussian army, for her unfounded susceptibilities, for her pretended armaments, for her presumption in interfering with the affairs of other countries, &c.

This situation is not surprising, for it is the necessary consequence of events and of the rivalry of the two peoples. I have taken care to expatiate on the character of both, in order to show more surely that it must infallibly lead to war.

People who, in France or elsewhere, look upon an understanding as possible, are not sufficiently acquainted with the Prussian character, or do not take it into sufficient account. Nevertheless, it is impossible to deny that the character of two rival peoples, their qualities and their faults, are very important evidences to assist the judgment in foretelling the probability of peace or war resulting from a given situation. It is precisely the same as between two individuals in a dispute, who will either arrange matters amicably or quarrel according to their respective temperaments, qualities, and defects.

Again, the Prussian nation is as susceptible as the French, quite as proud, more convinced of its own value; it is energetic, tenacious, ambitious, full of estimable and solid qualities, but rough, rather arrogant, and destitute of all generosity. And it is this people which has undertaken to solve, cost what it may, the problem of German unity, even if France cannot and will not consent to it. This

serious litigation has arisen between two nations equally susceptible and proud, ambitious and powerful, who look upon each other as sworn enemies, who inflicted on each other at the commencement of the century the most grievous affronts; between two nations who have nothing in common, neither language, nor religion, nor tendencies, nor characters! How is it possible to hope after this, that an understanding is possible? He must be a political dreamer, entirely ignorant of the functions of human passions, who could entertain such a hope. We must be prepared for it; the terrible and obstinate conflict will break out some day.

It is improbable that it will be occasioned by the absolute question of German unity, so long at least as M. de Bismarck conducts the affairs of the Confederation. This eminent man, a remarkable type of perfect balance between intelligence and energy of will, we may be certain will not commit any fault by impatience. He knows too well that time is his surest ally, and that in a war with France he would run the risk of counteracting his work of 1866. He recently explained to me, with great ability, the reasons which hinder Prussia from provoking or wishing for a war, and he concluded with these words: 'We shall never make war against France; it would be necessary for you to come here, and fire at us point blank.'

The gravity of the situation does not lie then in the question of German unity, but rather in the reciprocal attitude into which this question has plunged France and Prussia—an attitude characterised by distrust, jealousy, aroused susceptibilities, which these Powers will maintain so long as the litigation lasts. The situation cannot indeed but get worse; general uneasiness will be more and more augmented, whilst distrust and jealousy will go on in-

creasing on both sides. It is more easy to understand these things if living in Prussia. Already, even, matters have come to such a pass that the most simple fact in appearance, the most insignificant event, may lead to a rupture. In other words, 'war is at the mercy of a single incident.'

Whatever it may be, superficial minds will look upon it as the cause of the war, but the cause will be much deeper and be more complicated. The reciprocal hostility of the two peoples, an ever increasing hostility, may be compared to a fruit which ripens; and the incident which will lead to a rupture will be like the chance shock which causes the matured fruit to fall from the tree.

(2) *Prussia has no Aggressive Designs.*

I have already stated that Prussia has no intention of attacking France, and that, on the contrary, to avoid war she will do all that is compatible with her honour. I cannot tell how much this opinion differs from that which is propagated in France by people of little judgment, who know nothing of Prussia, who substitute their own passions or desires for those of a whole nation, and who are convinced after reading the most nonsensical essays. If these people took the trouble to visit Prussia, and there to study matters without passion or prejudice, they would most surely change their opinions. How much has been said, and how much will be said, on the ambition of Prussia, on her arrogance, and on her formidable military preparations! She is ambitious indeed, not wanting in arrogance, and her military preparations are formidable. But why then jump at the conclusion that these preparations have an aggressive character? This is another result of that detestable ignorance which is attached to the majority of the French public, for it is, as will be shown, the origin of all our mistakes.

How many people could have been found in France, before 1866, who were anxious to study Germany and to acquaint themselves with German affairs? Was not the Rhine, and is it not still, for all practical purposes, like another wall of China? Nevertheless authors, journalists and others, who have not even lived in Germany, nor studied its history and institutions, write and argue upon all subjects, judge and criticise everything, and so become the leaders of a yet more ignorant public. They have not failed to see in the military activity which prevails in Prussia a preparation for war, not knowing that this activity is of old date, and that it only continues, being, so to say, innate in the life of the nation.

The fact is, that the necessary task of assimilating the three annexed provinces as rapidly as possible gives this activity a greater outward show by reason of the vast area of the labour. I will explain myself.

Before 1866 the French public was entirely ignorant of all that appertained to the Prussian organisation, and to the immense military impetus which the King imparted to the whole nation about 1860. The army was reorganised and considerably increased; the system of obligatory service, most rigorously enforced, gave Prussia an effective army of 600,000 trained soldiers: the greater part of the service was ameliorated; the military commissions worked with great assiduity; grand autumn manœuvres were established; the Reserve and the Landwehr were called out for training; a new scheme for army mobilisation was adopted; steel breech-loading cannon were issued; unceasing experiments were made with land service artillery; in a word, immense military activity prevailed: was not all this nearly unknown in France?

The events of 1866 came to pass: it was impossible to

ignore Prussia any longer, and the French public began to make inquiries. But they not unnaturally thought that all that they saw was new, and dated from 1866. Thanks, then, to the reciprocal feelings of distrust to which the events of this year gave birth among the two peoples, the French public was quite prepared to look upon the military activity of Prussia, an activity which it had heard of for the first time, as directed against France in the shape of aggression. This military activity which was only being kept up, this constant attention which was paid to the army, in order never to be surprised by events, the great manœuvres, the numerous experiments of every kind, the public called 'preparations for war,' devised with the design of attacking France.

A circumstance, however, contributed to deceive the public. Prussia in 1866 annexed Hanover, Schleswig-Holstein, and the duchies of Hesse Cassel and Nassau, with the free town of Frankfort, which had neither military organisation, nor infantry armament, nor artillery *matériel.* It was therefore necessary to introduce them into these three provinces. Think what time and what labour such an assimilation entails, and you will admit the necessity of Prussia's accomplishing it as rapidly as possible. Besides which, she had concluded offensive and defensive alliances with Bavaria, Würtemberg, and Baden, which were more or less bound to adopt the Prussian organisation, regulations, and armament. That also must be considered in order to understand the causes of the prodigious military activity of which Germany is now the theatre.

### *Foresight of Prussia.*

But if it be true that Prussia cherishes no thought of aggression, it is equally true that its military activity is

increased by the probability of a war with France, or rather by the prevalent belief that the war is inevitable. I will here speak of a most serious fact. I wish to call attention to the melancholy contrast which is offered on the one hand by the foresight of Prussia united with the watchfulness which results therefrom, and on the other hand by the blindness and indifference of France, which prevents her from foreseeing that the war must come, and that every other matter should be set aside to give place to this principal question.

I have already stated my opinion on the probabilities of the rupture, in stating that the war will break out some day. I am therefore not surprised to see my opinion here shared by everybody; and, like a true patriot, I cannot but regard with sadness the foresight of our future enemies.

Prussia, I said, looks upon herself as charged with the execution of the mission of uniting Germany, and she is fully determined to devote herself to it. She is not well aware that this project cannot be indifferent to France; that her victories in 1866 have roused the susceptibilities of her former enemies; and that the reciprocal feelings of mistrust have assumed such a proportion that war may result from the smallest incident. And as this nation is serious and industrious, she will take every care not to be surprised on the day that hostilities are declared, in the same way that she is prepared to meet the struggle with all the means at her disposal. Hence this double military activity in Prussia—hence her haste to assimilate as rapidly as possible her three new corps d'armée, and the Saxon army, in introducing into them her organisation, her regulations, and her armament—hence the expénditure, the improvements of every description, the result of experience acquired in the war of 1866—hence the ex-

pensive experiments of every kind—hence the expenditure and tremendous efforts made to establish a powerful navy.

We must look upon it as certain, that we shall not surprise Prussia. Her military organisation, which enables her to concentrate on the frontier, within five-and-twenty days, several armies, each consisting of 100,000 men; the vigilance of the Government which looks after its destinies; her belief in the probability of an extreme struggle with France—are all reasons for our finding her fully prepared at the time when the conflict comes to pass.

(4) *Lack of Foresight of France. Fatal Consequences.*

Does France show under similar circumstances the same foresight as Prussia? Unhappily not; and sad as it is to acknowledge, nobody can tell where the fatal blindness with which France is stricken will end. Thus a terrible war is coming, and threatens to break out from day to day. Our most serious enemy clearly sees this redoubtable probability; he watches for the moment of the collision, although not wishing for it; he is ready to support it with 'all the male population of the nation,' with a million of the best disciplined, the most experienced, the most completely organised soldiers that exist: and in France, where forty million men ought all to be convinced, like the Prussian people, that the war is inevitable and at the mercy of an incident—where every project should give place to one only, that of the public safety, it would be difficult to find even a few persons who have a correct idea of the situation, and who recognise the immense danger which it entails.

That which causes my apprehension is precisely this striking contrast between the foresight of Prussia and

the blindness of France. Nations, like individuals, cannot make ready to ward off a danger unless they foresee its arrival; otherwise they remain inactive at the risk of seeing the fatal result of their misreckoning. Now Prussia puts aside everything to make way for this vital question of 'preparation for war,' and holds herself constantly in readiness to enter the lists with all the imposing forces which she has at her disposal, whilst France becomes weaker and weaker, as if indifferent to her own security. At such a sight it is impossible to refrain from loudly blaming that fatal ignorance and detestable infatuation which prevent us from discerning what Prussia clearly sees: that war is inevitable.

The contrast between the two countries extends unhappily to every particular; to the legislature, to the press, as well as to the moral state, of the two nations.

In the Prussian Legislature the various parties, however antagonistic they may be on questions of interior policy, are all of one opinion against France, and against what they call her ambition and her claim to interfere with the affairs of Germany. All, inspired with ardent patriotism and full of susceptibility which accompanies foresight, give up their own views, and support or encourage the Government in its efforts to organise formidable military forces, and to create a powerful navy, prepared to act at the decisive moment.

What, on the other hand, do we see in France? A Chamber, which boasts of representing the country, and which is indeed its faithful portrait as regards inconsistency and levity, as we may see from its law on the Garde Nationale Mobile, and its obstinacy in not seeing on the German horizon the cloud which is gradually getting blacker and blacker, and which threatens to burst forth;—a majority composed entirely of mediocrities, of men without character,

without loftiness of purpose, and without any of the attributes of politicians;—an Opposition in which ambitious and conceited lawyers are the ruling spirits, who have no other patriotism than their hateful recriminations or their calculated rancour, who hide their incapacity and impotency beneath flowery language, who pretend to be mindful of the interests of the country, and, to acquire a factious notoriety, dispute with the Government on every soldier and on every shilling—men whom you could not do otherwise than execrate if they were conscious of their own criminal conduct, for in attempting to enfeeble France they betray her for the good of her most formidable enemy. A warrior described them exactly thus: 'The new Thersites are cutting in their language, but faint of heart and weak of arm—made more for talking than for fighting.'

The same contrast is found in the press of the two countries.

While the Prussian press omits nothing calculated to excite hatred and envy against France, refraining neither from affront nor calumny, it is unanimous in maintaining among the public passions hostile to France, in representing her as the only irreconcilable enemy of Germany, and in supporting the Government in the execution of its measures to prepare itself against any contingency. What is the case in France?

There we have a press of which the majority of organs, ignoring the danger of the situation, and occupying itself unceasingly in forcing a breach in the fundamental institutions of the country, endeavours to disseminate insubordination and demoralisation in the army, and goes so far as to demand a reduction in effective strength, or even disarmament, when France would not have too much, with all her forces, all her energy, with complete union of every party, to support the approaching contest.

Now if the moral state of the two countries is considered, one must admit that this far-sighted, vigilant Prussian nation, so imbued with the mission she pursues, is at the same time the best educated, the best disciplined in Europe; that it is full of vitality, energy, and patriotism, not yet perverted by the desire for material enjoyments; that she maintains an ardent faith and respect for everything worthy of it.

The contrast is heart-rending. France has laughed at everything, and the most respectable things are no longer respected. Virtue, family, love of country, honour, religion, are alike ridiculed by a frivolous and sceptical generation. The theatres are become schools of wickedness and baseness. The poison is sucked, drop by drop, into the organs of a blasée and ignorant society, which lacks the intelligence or the energy to reform its institutions, or to adopt others based on principles of justice and right, conformable to the spirit of modern times, and above all, fitted to instruct it and to raise the standard of morality. Again, all the fine qualities of the nation, its generosity, its loyalty, its wit, its warmness of heart, are either growing weaker or fading little by little, and to such an extent that soon this noble French race will only recognise itself by its faults. And during this time France does not perceive that more serious nations pass it on the road of progress, and push it back to the second class.

All these opinions would be little appreciated in France, but nevertheless they are nothing but an expression of truth. I wish enlightened and unprejudiced Frenchmen would come and study Prussia. They would soon see a serious nation, rough but strong, certainly destitute of every charm, of every delicate and generous sentiment, of any attractive gift, but endowed, on the other hand, with the most estimable qualities, with the love of work and study,

application, the spirit of order and economy, patriotism, the sense of duty and individual dignity, finally, with respect to authority and obedience to the law—they would see a country splendidly administered, governed by strong, healthy, and moral institutions, where the highest class show themselves to be worthy of their rank, and keep up the influence which they possess by being the most enlightened, by giving the example of sacrifice, by devoting themselves unremittingly to the service of the State; a country, in fact, where everything is in its proper place, and where the most perfect order exists in every organ of the social body. Perhaps these observers would involuntarily compare Prussia to an imposing edifice, massive, strongly constructed from the base to the summit, in which each layer of bricks is placed in the best situation to contribute to the solidity of the whole—an edifice which one admires for its unbroken order, but where nothing charms the eye or calls forth the smallest emotion.

What a contrast with the disorder which prevails in the social state of France, where all is confused, mixed up, and upset; where, under the pretext that everyone can rise to occupy the highest positions, no account is taken, in estimating or employing a man, of that necessary balance between education, morality, and information, which causes posts involving the most honourable and most important functions to be filled as well by men ill brought up, but of certain ability, as by ignorant people who have no other claim than their social position and their *savoir faire*! Again, it is in France that the most people are met who belong to no class—envious and troubled spirits, each one looking for his path, but unable to find it. On this head our confused social condition might, it seems, be compared to one of those architectural *chefs-d'œuvre* of ancient Greece

which an earthquake has shaken to its very foundations, breaking, confusing, overthrowing everything: the traveller still admires the magnificent or graceful *débris* of the edifice, which lie pell-mell upon the ground, and he withdraws with the mind enchanted, but with a sorrowful heart.

How is it possible not to be touched by these contrasts when a man is convinced, as I am, that the war is inevitable? It is important not to forget it that in this war Prussia, or rather the North German Confederation, will dispose of a million of trained, disciplined, and powerfully organised soldiers, whilst France will barely reckon three or four hundred thousand;[1] and the armies of the Confederation will include all the male portion, all the intellect, all the living forces of a nation full of faith, energy, and patriotism, whilst the French army will be almost exclusively composed of the poorest and most ignorant class of the nation. Again, the German army, by the very fact that it contains the whole male population, without any social distinction, will feel itself sustained and strengthened by the esteem and unparalleled consideration which it enjoys in the country; whilst the French army, looked upon by some as a useless institution, *battue en brèche* by others, who sow corruption and insubordination in its ranks, is pressed down under an absolute lack of any esteem, or sense of the mission which it has to fulfil.

For the last time I draw attention to this striking contrast between the two armies and the two nations themselves. I cannot conceal it: it forms, for me and for a few Frenchmen who live in Berlin, who look upon the war as inevitable, the subject of our saddest preoccupations.

[1] It is certainly said that the establishment of the Garde Nationale Mobile will raise our forces to more than 800,000 men; but I have sufficiently explained in the first part of this despatch what may be expected from this paralysed institution.

I should go out of my province in attempting to point out the great measures which it would be necessary to take to remedy this deplorable state of things. Is it possible not to be touched by that moral dissolution which makes such rapid progress in France, and is it possible not to perceive that the torpor in which the nation lives, as well as its blind presumption, prevent its discerning the evil?

It is the duty of the Government to undertake a task of regeneration which has become indispensable; and it will never succeed in this noble enterprise except by modifying from top to bottom many of our essential institutions, or rather by replacing them with others calculated to instruct the people, to raise their morality, and to develop their manly qualities. Among these regenerative institutions, there are two which should be taken in the first rank, of which Prussia gives superabundant proof; viz. obligatory military service, and compulsory education.

Only to mention obligatory service, one must before everything ask oneself if the French nation possesses the necessary qualities to adopt and to apply it. The answer, unhappily, is discouraging. Infatuated with herself, and perverted by egotism, the nation would bend with difficulty to an institution of which she does not even discern the strengthening and fruitful principle, and the application of which requires virtues which she does not possess: love of sacrifice, abnegation, the sense of duty. Resembling individuals whom nothing in life can reform except bitter lessons of experience, peoples never succeed in ameliorating the institutions which govern them without having recognised the immediate necessity of cruel trials.

Jena was necessary for Prussia to return to herself; and feeling the necessity of fortifying herself with healthy and masculine institutions, she adopted the system of ob-

ligatory military service for every subject. It may be said, in passing, that if Prussia did not already possess this institution, it would be impossible to make her adopt it now.

Once only during fifty years was France in a position to introduce among her institutions that of obligatory service. It was in 1848, when, thanks to the promulgation of ideas produced by the Revolution of February, the National Assembly was admirably situated to give a true and serious application to the principles of equality which were so loudly proclaimed, by adopting obligatory service. It made an effort in this direction by proposing to abolish that hideous affliction of military substitution, and it appointed a Commission, of which the chairman was General Lamoricière. But the majority of the Assembly, governed by the mean and egotistical sentiments of the bourgeoisie, defeated the proposed law; and I do not hesitate to say that the men who prevented France from entering, since 1849, upon a path which would have brought her later to adopt the system of obligatory military service, with all its advantages for the moral and intellectual development of a people, exercised a disastrous influence on the destinies of the country.

BERLIN: *August* 12, 1869.

VII.

## THE STATE OF THE APPLICATION OF THE LAW OF MILITARY ORGANISATION OF 1861.

*Despatch of June 24, 1870.*

When a Power adopts a new law of military organisation, as Prussia did in 1861, and France in 1868, a certain number of years of transition must expire before the new law can be applied in all its details. It is thus, for instance, that the law of February 1, 1868, will not be completely enforced in France for five or six years. With respect to the Prussian army, it is necessary, if we wish to become well acquainted with it, to take into account from time to time the successive changes, which the application of the law of 1861 brings about in the various branches which compose it.

The year 1871 will mark on this head an important epoch in the sense that the period of transition will expire for that portion of the army which corresponds to Prussia before 1866. In other words. It is in 1871 that this portion of the Prussian army will be constituted in all its details conformably to the provisions of the law of 1861 modified by that of 1867.

In order to explain this fact more clearly, I will first recall the principal features of the law of 1861. The reasons which induced Prussia to reform that of 1814 are known: these were, before everything, the radical vices which it contained—vices which showed themselves in a most lamentable manner during the campaign of Schleswig, and

the Grand-Duchy of Baden, in 1848 and 1849, and at the time of the mobilisation of 1850 and 1859 (*vide my despatch of November*, 1866), added to the desire of increasing the military power of a country, of which the real but admitted ambition, and the sense of its own strength, fostered a wish to play some day a less obscure part in Europe.

The Prussian Government had a reason, cut and dried, to cause the acceptance of the augmentation of the forces: it was to revert, as it had the power to do, to the strict application of the system of obligatory service for every subject, which had been constantly evaded since 1814. In point of fact, until 1859, i.e. during forty-five years, the annual contingent remained the same as in 1814 (about 40,000 men), although the number of the population had increased little by little, and from time to time, from ten to eighteen millions. The Government resolved first to apply the principle of obligatory service in all its rigour, and in consequence from 1859 it called annual contingents of 63,000[1] men to the colours, and it created 36 new regiments of infantry, and 10 of cavalry, which raised the number of the former to 81, and of the latter to 48.

Another important measure succeeded in imparting to this law its true character. It was decided that the Landwehr should no longer form a portion of the Field Army; and they attained their aim by giving two additional contingents to the Reserve, i.e. increasing from two years to four the time which the men who passed out of the regular army remained in the Reserve. Regarding the Landwehr, its function was reduced in principle to the de-

[1] The number called out in 1858 was only twenty-six per cent. of the young men fit for service; it was raised from 1859 to forty per cent.

fence of the interior of the country. The general provisions of the new organisation were then as follows:

(1) A considerable augmentation of the army by levying stronger contingents;

(2) The exclusion of the Landwehr from the Field Army.

The length of service was 19 years, viz.:

Field Army 7 years; 3 years with colours, 4 years with Reserve.

Landwehr 12 years: 5 years in 1st ban, 7 years in 2nd ban.

The law was promulgated in 1861, but the great augmentation of cadres of which I have just treated was made from 1859 to 1860. The law had thus been six years in operation, when the war of 1866 burst forth, and nevertheless it had not attained its full development, for Prussia, instead of disposing then of four contingents of Reserve, had only three (those of 1860, 1861, and 1862) at command, which obliged her to make the battalions up to their war strength with Landwehr men.

After the war, Prussia, increased by three provinces, Hanover, Schleswig-Holstein and Hesse, naturally increased its military forces. The number of regiments of infantry was increased from 81 to 105, of cavalry from 48 to 68, &c. But the law of 1861 underwent only one important modification, which reduced the total period of effective service from 19 to 12 years (law of November 3, 1867). This reduction of the term of service of the Landwehr from 12 years to 5 naturally suppressed the distinction between the 1st and 2nd bans. The duration of service was therefore thus:

Field Army 7 years; 3 with the colours, 4 in the Reserve.

In the Landwehr, 5 years. Total 12 years.

Having recalled to mind the previous provisions, it behoves me to point out what stage has been reached in the application of the law of 1861, modified by that of November 9, 1867.

The actual Prussian army with its permanent corps d'armée, each recruited in a military district which corresponds more or less with a province of the kingdom, can be described as consisting of two distinct parts. The first comprises the eight corps d'armée, corresponding to the eight provinces of former Prussia, besides the Guards, which are recruited throughout the monarchy; the second consists of the three corps d'armée furnished by the provinces annexed in 1866. As the latter have been subjected to Prussian military institutions only since the conquest, they are naturally behind the other eight in the application of the new law. It is necessary therefore to examine separately these two fractions of the Prussian army.

1. Prussia before 1866.—By virtue of the law of 1861, the contingent of 1863 (which was in the Austrian war during its third year of service) will pass into the Landwehr on the 1st of October, 1870. The Landwehr, which corresponds with the 81 infantry regiments of former Prussia, will then be composed of the survivors of the five contingents of 1859, 1860, 1861, 1862, and 1863. That of 1859 is the last of the weak contingents of 40,000 men which were levied since 1814: it is therefore only on the 1st of October, 1871, that the Landwehr will include the survivors of the five strong contingents of 63,000 men. This day marks, as is seen, an interesting epoch—that from which the new law of military organisation will for ever apply itself in full for the portion of the army recruited from the eight old provinces; for then all the Landwehr men will have come from the strong contingents, and will

have served three years with the colours and four in the Reserve.

It is interesting to inquire what in 1871 will be the effective total of this Landwehr. In order to reply exactly, it would be necessary to know the number of losses a contingent of 63,000 men suffers after 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 years. In France we estimate the losses at 40 per cent. per annum, but this proportion seems to me to be too high for Prussia, where it cannot, I think, be reckoned at more than 31 or 32 per cent. We thus get the number of 229,000 men as representing the effective of 5 contingents of Landwehr to the 1st of October, 1871. If one only refers to the 1st of October, 1870, when the Landwehr will still include the survivors of the weak contingent of 1859, the figure is smaller, 214,000 men. The half is more than enough to bring up to their war strength all the Landwehr battalions of former Prussia. A Landwehr battalion on a war footing usually numbers 600 men, and to each three battalion regiments of the line correspond two Landwehr battalions: thus it will be sufficient to form 162 battalions, which correspond with the 81 regiments of former Prussia, with a total of 162 times 600, viz. 97,200 men. The Landwehr will therefore number on October 1, 1870, more than 100,000 men, who would be utilised, in case of need, to complete the Landwehr battalions in the annexed provinces and in the other States of the Confederation.

2. The Three Provinces annexed in 1866.—The Prussian organisation was not introduced into these provinces until after the conquest: therefore the law of 1861 will not be in full execution until about 1878, or even 1880. Now, the corps d'armée of these provinces only includes two contingents of men of the Reserve, those of 1865 and 1866. That

provision of the law of 1861 which requires four contingents of the Reserve, so important a provision for the good composition of the Field Army, by its enabling the battalions to be brought up to their full strength without having recourse to the Landwehr, will not then be carried out till October, 1871. At that time, and even from next summer, these troops will be able, in the event of a mobilisation, to complete their war strength by the calling in of their own reserves, without the help of those of the 8 provinces of former Prussia. The date of October 1, 1871, is, as will be seen, interesting on more than one head, for it puts the law of 1861 into full execution.

3. The other States of the Confederation.—The minor States of Northern Germany are in the same state as the provinces annexed to Prussia; that is to say, they were not subjected to Prussian laws until after 1866, and hence it is only next autumn that they will be able to put their various corps on a war footing by the incorporation of their own reserves.

As regards the Landwehr of these States, its organisation cannot be completed before 1878 or 1880. In the event of war, they would bring the battalions up to an effective of 600 men by incorporating the soldiers on the excess of the establishment of the Prussian Landwehr.

I will here observe that the new Landwehr battalions, those of the three annexed provinces as well as those of the lesser States of the Confederation, are far from having their proper complement of officers. It is known that the Landwehr officers are principally recruited among one-year volunteers; but as the Prussian military institutions have only during the last few years been in operation in the new provinces and in the little States, the system of one-year volunteers has only been able, up to the present time, to

furnish a very limited number of officers. Now it has hardly half of its proper establishment, and in all probability 8 or 10 years will elapse before the regulated complement of new Landwehr battalions can be reached. In the event of a mobilisation, it would be necessary to transfer a considerable number of subalterns from the Field Army, as was done in 1866.

It would, perhaps, be suitable to conclude the present despatch by reviewing the means by which the Prussians reduced the duration of service to 12 years (instead of 19); but as I have given, on this point, all necessary explanation in my despatch of June 2, 1869, I allow myself to dismiss it. I have simply endeavoured to point out the gradual progress which time has effected in the application of the military law of 1861, and to impress the importance of the year 1871. It will not only be notable for the debates of the new Reichstag, regarding the Articles 60 and 62 of the Constitution of the North German Confederation, but in addition it will mark, as I have desired to show, an interesting date at which the entire Prussian army will be thoroughly constituted conformably to the law of 1871. I sum up, in conclusion, the accomplished progress on this path.

On October 1, 1871, will be definitely constituted, conformably to the new law of military organisation:

(1) For Prussia before 1866: Field Army, 3 contingents with the colours, 4 in the Reserve. The Landwehr, 5 contingents. That is the sum total of the military force.

(2) For the 3 new provinces, and for all the States of the Confederation: Field Army, 3 contingents with the colours, 4 contingents of Reserve.

The formation of the Landwehr will not be complete

till towards 1880; but its battalions can be now put upon their war strength (600 men) by means of the incorporation of excess men of old Prussia.

*Economical measures.*
*Anticipatory discharges.*
*Time of levying delayed.*
*Leave granted by the King.*

The 1st of October is the normal date when the contingent of the third year of service passes into the Reserve, to be succeeded by the contingent of the new levy. But for several years the Prussian Government, for economical motives, discharges by anticipation into the Reserve the men of the third year of service, while it does not incorporate the new contingent till later on. The result of this double measure is the truest economy of all those which the Government tries to realise; for it represents in means the sum of the cost of pay and keep, during three months, of the third of the effective of the infantry of the line and field artillery.

This year the Royal order of February 17, providing for the anticipatory discharge into the Reserve, is the same as last year. The manœuvres ought to be finished in every corps d'armée by the 15th of September at latest, and the superior commanders are ordered to grant furloughs to the men who took part in the autumn manœuvres, the first or second day after their return to their respective garrisons.

The order of February 17, then, fixes the number of recruits which each corps shall receive in return for the class sent to the Reserve. This total number, which constitutes the contingent of this year, is 95,540, including 477 men for the navy. Out of these 95,540, 86,860 are levied

by the law, and 8,680 are voluntarily engaged. Total 95,540 men.

The 86,860 men who are levied are thus divided:

| | |
|---|---|
| Prussia | 69,691 |
| Saxony | 7,720 |
| Hesse | 795 |
| Other States | 8,654 |
| Men | 86,860 |

The incorporation of this contingent of 1870 will take place on the following dates:—

The reserves of cavalry, horse artillery, and train should rejoin on October 15.

The foot troops of the Guard, November 3.

Those of the line, December 15.

But the necessity for economising is so great, that, in addition to the measures which I have just enumerated, Prussia adds another, which consists in giving temporary furloughs in considerable numbers to the troops 'of the second year.' They are called in Prussia *congés du Roi*. This measure, which I quoted in my despatch of December 2, 1869, and which is said to be provisional, dates from 1868. I here give its dispositions:

'Every company of infantry sends 5 men on furlough; each battalion of chasseurs 64 men,' &c.

BARON STOFFEL.

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